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In This Issue

JONATHAN WARNER, professor and tutor in social sciences at Quest University Canada, analyzes the experience of some of the roughly 30 Iowa communities that experimented with issuing scrip as a means of combating the economic effects of the Great Depression. He shows the diversity of the plans and the effects they had, identifying the conditions that determined whether those experiments were relatively successful or not.

RENEE ANN CRAMER, associate professor and director of the Program in Law, Politics, and Society at Drake University, examines the establishment and operation of the Des Moines BirthPlace in the 1980s and sets its history in its local and national context. The contemporary national feminist movement was seeking birth options beyond the medical, in-hospital model. Meanwhile, the BirthPlace's location in a capital city with a strong, sympathetic corporate leadership provided unique opportunities for success.

Front Cover

The business district along Hawarden's Central Avenue is bustling in this image from the 1930s. Hawarden was the Iowa birthplace of experiments with local scrip as a means of combating the effects of the Great Depression. For more on such experiments in Hawarden and other Iowa communities, see Jonathan Warner's article in this issue. Photo from State Historical Society of Iowa, Iowa City.

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Iowa Stamp Scrip: Economic Experimentation in Iowa Communities during the Great Depression

JONATHAN WARNER

IN THE 1930s about 30 Iowa communities experimented with issuing scrip (a substitute for money) as a local means of combating the economic effects of the Great Depression. Sarah Elvins documented the use of scrip in Iowa from 1932 through 1934.¹ Here I will give a broader historical account of Iowa's experience with stamp scrip, with detailed accounts of some particular plans

1. Sarah Elvins, "Scrip Money and Slump Cures: Iowa's Experiments with Alternative Currency during the Great Depression," *Annals of Iowa* 64 (2005), 221-45.

I gratefully acknowledge a grant from the State Historical Society of Iowa that allowed this research to be completed. I am also grateful to Dordt College and the librarians there, particularly Dawn Van Den Hul, Interlibrary Loan Coordinator, who was somehow able to obtain the often obscure books and articles that I requested. Libraries, newspaper offices, and local history societies around Iowa were unfailingly helpful, providing access to archival material and explaining how to use a wonderful diversity of microfilm readers. Val Haverhals of Hawarden provided photocopies of many sections of the Hawarden papers, the *Independent* and *Chronicle*; and the Pella Chamber of Commerce gave me access to the minutes of their meetings from the 1930s, which greatly enriched the account of the trials of the local stamp scrip scheme. My wife, Lynda, deserves thanks for her forbearance during my many visits to small-town libraries and for proofreading. Marvin Bergman provided much encouragement and support, carefully reading drafts of the paper and cleaning up my tortured prose. And thanks go to Hugo Godschalk of Frankfurt, Germany, whose e-mail to Dordt College got me started on this.

THE ANNALS OF IOWA 71 (Winter 2012). © The State Historical Society of Iowa, 2012.

and projects. Delving into the details of a selection of stamp scrip projects not only shows the diversity of such plans and the results they achieved but also has relevance for today. Interest in local currencies has revived recently, and concerns about how to stimulate an economy stuck in recession have renewed interest in policies and proposals from the Great Depression.²

“Stamp money” is a particular form of scrip that required a special stamp to be affixed to the certificate each time it was used (or each week or month). The funds raised from the sale of stamps would accumulate and then be used to redeem the scrip. For this reason, stamp scrip is sometimes referred to as self-liquidating money.

Like many other suggestions of the time, stamp scrip arose as a response to the temporary problems caused by the Great Depression. After the boom years of World War I, the United States experienced a recession. For the urban areas of the country, it was a relatively short downturn, but for rural areas, recovery never really came. As the Roaring Twenties progressed, agricultural prices failed to return to their prewar highs.³ When the Depression hit and agricultural prices fell again, rural communities, including those in Iowa, faced further difficulties. Used to relying on their own resources, they sought local solutions to their problems. As the Depression took hold, people with debts lacked the means to pay them off. Money for poor relief dried up; tax revenues fell as farmers and those who relied on them defaulted on their taxes; banks found it hard to recoup loans, and then discovered that foreclosure meant big losses (especially when groups of farmers at the consequent auction intimidated potential bidders).

Could the tradition of self-help and concern about one’s suffering neighbors produce a way out of the Depression? There

2. The transition towns movement (which seeks to increase sustainability of city living) sees community currencies as a means of encouraging economic localization and so reducing carbon emissions from transportation. Peter North, *Local Money* (London, 2010), provides a contemporary guide; the *International Journal of Community Currency Research* (at www.uea.ac.uk/env/ijccr/) has been recording developments in the field since 1997.

3. See, for example, John Fraser Hart, “Change in the Corn Belt,” *Geographical Review* 76 (1986), 55 (fig. 3).

was certainly no shortage of suggestions. Relief agencies solicited donations in kind, as well as asking for cash, but the size of the demands on local resources, even given their strict eligibility requirements,⁴ soon meant that funds were in very short supply.

By 1932, ideas on how to end the Depression abounded. John Norton of Suffield, Connecticut, thought that money should be backed by electricity production rather than gold.⁵ Frank G. Graham, a Princeton University economist, thought that the unemployed could be put back to work and paid in what they produced.⁶ A radio station in Norfolk, Nebraska, aired the possibility of issuing scrip to farmers in exchange for cutting their corn production.⁷ When the Iowa House and Senate convened after the 1932 election, members of the legislature, an Indianola newspaper reported, were “besieged with petitions, letters, telegrams and personal visitors proposing this and that thing — much of the suggestions resulting from radical and ill-advised conversation on city street corners and rural meetings. What may be lightly said and suggested in places remote from the legislative halls may look foolish and puerile when considered from the hot-spot of legislative enactment.”⁸

Issuing scrip was just one option, but one that received, at least initially, substantial support. Scrip had been used in the financial panic of 1907, and merchants had often issued their own tokens. Stamp scrip had not been tried before, but seemed to be a way of stimulating business and providing for the unemployed. America’s most noted economist of the time, Irving Fisher, produced a book advocating stamp scrip as a part of the solution to the nation’s problems.⁹ Fisher wrote the book, he said, because as the idea spread rapidly across the country,

4. Only “deserving” unemployed men, resident in the city, generally qualified for relief. See Nancy E. Rose, *Put to Work: Relief Programs in the Great Depression* (New York, 1994), 17.

5. *Madison (SD) Daily Leader*, 12/30/1932.

6. Frank D. Graham, *The Abolition of Unemployment* (Princeton, NJ, 1932).

7. *Norfolk Daily News*, 1/11/1933.

8. *Indianola Tribune*, 2/7/1933.

9. Irving Fisher, *Stamp Scrip* (New York, 1933). Fisher’s earlier (and more famous) work, *Booms and Depressions* (New York, 1932), includes an account of Silvio Gesell’s stamped money plan (appendix 7, pp. 226–30).

stamp scrip had become a “sensation.”¹⁰ In February 1933 Congress even considered a bill for a national issue of stamp scrip.¹¹ Much of the enthusiasm for stamp scrip came through news of the experiment in Hawarden, which briefly brought national (and even international) attention to that small town in north-west Iowa.

Stamp scrip existed in two “pure” forms. Transactions scrip required a stamp to be affixed every time someone used it. Because the first Iowa example, the Hawarden Plan, was of this form and was highly successful, most other Iowa issues were also of this type. By contrast, time-based stamp scrip required the stamp to be affixed at certain predetermined intervals, varying from three days to one month. Some communities issued a hybrid version — a stamp purchased for each transaction, or after so many days if it had not been used in the interim. Although small local plans could produce good results, experience suggests that neither the transactions stamp scrip that Charles Zylstra proposed for Hawarden nor the time-based version, originally conceived by Silvio Gesell and advocated by Fisher, was very successful.¹² The hybrid version, however, did produce fair results where localities tried it, at least in Iowa.

Stamp scrip appealed to cash-strapped communities for a number of reasons. First, it looked as if it might provide a way out from the depths of the Depression by stimulating business and by providing the lacking medium of exchange. Second, it was a way for a community to provide sustenance for its unemployed and poor when no other avenue seemed to be open. And scrip appealed to the self-sufficiency ethos of many Iowa communities that preferred to rely on local action rather than wait to see what, if anything, might come out of Washington. Further, the self-liquidating nature of stamp money seemed to

10. Fisher, *Stamp Scrip*, chap. 1.

11. H.R. 14757, introduced February 22, 1933. See Ralph A. Mitchell and Neil Shafer, *Standard Catalog of Depression Scrip of the United States — The 1930's including Canada and Mexico* (Iola, WI, 1984), 311–13.

12. Silvio Gesell, *Die Natürliche Wirtschaftsordnung* (1916); translated into English by Philip Pye as *The Natural Economic Order* (Berlin-Frohnau, 1929); Fisher, *Stamp Scrip*, chap. 1, where he noted, “Stamp Scrip has two basic forms. And the one which happened to establish itself in this country as a precedent, is, in my opinion, the wrong one of the two.”

mean that all the projects would come to a natural end: when the scrip had finished circulating, the proceeds of the stamp sales redeemed the scrip.

Stamp scrip issues in Iowa ranged from the tiny (Humeston issued just 25 one-dollar certificates) to the overly ambitious (Polk County came to grief with a \$125,000 issue); from the successful (Keokuk, Hawarden, Rock Rapids, and several other small communities) to the disastrous (Polk County again). The initial Hawarden scrip issue is the best-known example, and Mason City's has been discussed before,¹³ but their experiences do not entirely represent what went on in towns and counties across the state.

In towns (and later counties) that decided to issue stamp scrip, a general pattern ensued: initial enthusiasm that communities, at last, had found a way of combating unemployment, then a period of disillusionment when the scrip circulated more slowly than anticipated. The issuer made appeals to get the stuff moving and to remind people to affix the stamp. Then came the development of an exit strategy: how to get the scrip out of circulation if no one seemed prepared to use it.

In most cases, municipalities used the scrip to pay unemployed family men to do a few days' work each week chopping wood, clearing vegetation from culverts, building roads, or engaging in other socially useful projects. Clearing snow became a popular use of labor in the especially hard winter of 1932–33. Des Moines used Polk County scrip to pay for some of the construction of its airport. Mason City's *Globe-Gazette* ran a competition to encourage readers to suggest suitable projects. A few cities used scrip to help farmers by buying corn or eggs at above the market price.¹⁴ This meant that salable commodities backed

13. See, for instance, Dan Buchan, "The Hawarden Script or Stamp Money," in *Pot Pourri* (Albert City, 1977). The plan merited a two-page account (by Don Leafstedt, relying on Buchan) in the town's centenary volume (1987). Hugo Godschalk, "Aufschwung durch lokales Nebengeld," *Zeitschrift für Sozialökonomie* 129 (2001), 11–16, includes a case study of Mason City. Elvins, "Scrip Money and Slump Cures," also makes reference to these examples.

14. Clear Lake used a "circulating check" rather than stamp scrip; Norfolk, Nebraska, used transactions stamp scrip but with only 35 two-cent stamps necessary for redemption; and Red Oak used 40 percent of its dated stamp scrip to purchase commodities.

the scrip, thereby requiring less than a full dollar's worth of stamps to be sold in order to have sufficient funds to redeem the scrip.

Most issuers followed Hawarden's lead in issuing one-dollar certificates. Some cities, though, preferred a 50-cent denomination.¹⁵ If, as was generally the case, customers received no (cash) change for their scrip,¹⁶ relatively large transactions had to be made; the smaller denomination then improved the rate of circulation of the scrip. Lake Mills used 20-cent certificates to pay unemployed transients to chop wood.¹⁷ There was, though, some fear that issuing fractional currency — denominations less than one dollar — was not strictly legal, but the authorities took no action against anyone in Iowa for doing so.¹⁸

Stamp scrip provided a helpful means of coping with some of the effects of the Depression for small towns in Iowa that met several conditions. The issue needed to be limited in size to prevent scrip "indigestion." Businesses had to be committed to the plan and take scrip as freely as they would accept cash. People with too much of the stuff needed a way to trade it in (a clearinghouse mechanism to overcome the problem of "congestion"). Finally, a reasonable exit plan was necessary. A few case studies illustrate how these conditions (or their absence) affected the relative success of stamp scrip experiments in Iowa communities. The case studies allow for the development of a more nuanced

15. A few places issued both 50¢ and \$1 denominations. Adel's first issue was of \$1 certificates, followed a few weeks later by 50¢ coupons. Very roughly, a dollar in 1932–33 would have the same purchasing power as somewhere between \$16 and \$18 in 2011 (see the inflation calculator at the Bureau of Labor Statistics' web site, www.bls.gov). Real wages are, of course, much higher today. Prevailing wages in Iowa for unskilled work were 20¢–50¢ per hour, compared with around \$17 in 2010.

16. Some merchants would issue their own credit note for any remaining value; others would give change if the customer would pay for a second stamp. Either way, these practices constituted a disincentive to use the scrip.

17. *Lake Mills Graphic*, 3/22/1933. The scrip needed 20 one-cent stamps for redemption. Bowling Green, Kentucky, also issued 20¢ stamp scrip, but required 10 two-cent stamps to be affixed. Mitchell and Shafer, *Catalog of Depression Scrip*, 98.

18. The National Bank Act of 1864 provided for notes of \$1 and above, but not for fractional currency. Some people apparently came to believe that this in effect constituted a ban on the issue of fractional currency.

TABLE
IOWA STAMP SCRIP ISSUERS

Town/ County	Date started (first issue)	Issue (\$) and denomination	Number and value of stamps	Type	Date ended
Hawarden	10/8/32	300 \$1	36 x 3¢	transaction	Jan 1936
Rock Rapids	11/26/32	250 50¢	54 x 1¢	hybrid: week	Dec 1933
Eldora	12/8/32	285 \$1	36 x 3¢	transaction	Nov 1933
Lamoni	12/8/32	100 \$1	36 x 3¢	transaction	
Sigourney	12/8/32	250 \$1	36 x 3¢	transaction	
Albia	12/21/32	375+ 50¢	54 x 1¢	transaction	
Pella	12/22/32	500 \$1	36 x 3¢	transaction	June 1937
New London	1/3/33	100 \$1	36 x 3¢	transaction	
Nevada	1/5/33	300 \$1	36 x 3¢	transaction	
Grinnell	1/10/33	500 \$1	36 x 3¢	transaction	Nov 1933
Adel	1/25/33	300 \$1	36 x 3¢	transaction	Jan 1934
What Cheer	1/27/33	150 \$1	36 x 3¢	transaction	Jan 1936
Adel (2)	2/8/33	600 50¢	36 x 1.5¢	dated: week	Jan 1934
West Burlington	2/10/33	50¢	50 x 1¢	transaction	
Humeston	2/11/33	25 \$1	54 x 2¢	transaction	July 1933
Boone	2/15/33	\$1	36 x 3¢	transaction	
Centerville	2/20/33	600 50¢	54 x 1¢	transaction	
Lake Mills	3/1/33	300 \$1	52 x 2¢	transaction	Nov 1933
Greenfield	3/11/33	600 50¢	36 x 1.5¢	transaction	Sept 1933
Red Oak	3/11/33	1000 \$1	52 x 2¢	dated: week	Nov 1933
Bedford	3/13/33	300 \$1	50 x 2¢	transaction	
Lenox	3/15/33	50¢	36 x 1.5¢	transaction	
Pella (2)	3/22/33	1000 \$1	50 x 2¢	transaction	June 1937
Keokuk	3/27/33	500 \$1	36 x 3¢	transaction	June 1933
Cass	4/6/33	4400 \$1	50 x 2¢	transaction	June 1935
Winneshiek	April 33	6000 \$1	50 x 2¢	transaction	Aug 1934
Hawarden (3)	4/10/33	300 \$1	36 x 3¢	time: month	May 1936
Earlham	4/22/33	50¢	36 x 1.5¢	transaction	
Iowa City	5/3/33	1630+ \$1	50 x 2¢	transaction	
Polk	May 33	125,000 \$1	50 x 2¢	transaction	June 1934
Mason City	5/6/33	10,000 \$1	52 x 2¢	hybrid: week	June 1934

SOURCE: Ralph A. Mitchell and Neil Shafer, *Standard Catalog of Depression Scrip of the United States* (Iola, WI, 1984), plus newspaper reports. There are also issues reported for Joice and a 20¢ second issue for Lake Mills, but no details are known.

view of the stamp scrip experiments and may perhaps even offer a guide to best practices if the need ever arises for a self-liquidating form of community-based credit in the future.

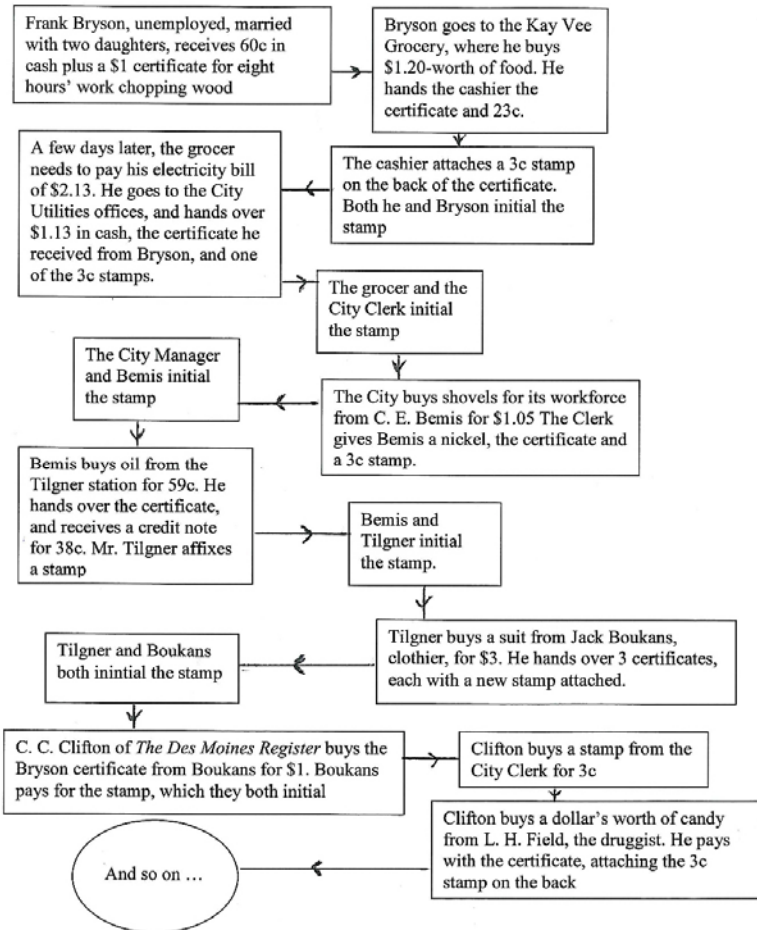
THE STORY of stamp scrip in Iowa is inextricably linked with the name of Charles Zylstra of Hawarden. A prominent local businessman with political aspirations, he persuaded Hawarden's Chamber of Commerce and city council to adopt his plan. The world — in the guise of Yale economist Irving Fisher, numerous journalists, and even a Pathe News team — journeyed to Hawarden to see the scrip plan at work. As a result, this quiet little town on the Big Sioux River (pop. 2,459 in 1930) enjoyed its moment of fame. Letters arrived from as far away as Greece and Estonia asking for details of Zylstra's idea. Imitations appeared throughout Iowa and elsewhere in the United States. Zylstra was able to harness the publicity he received to secure election (as a Democrat in overwhelmingly Republican Sioux County, no less!) to the Iowa legislature in the November 1932 general election.

The Hawarden plan was not the first use of stamp scrip in the United States, however. The earliest use began several months earlier in Anaheim, California, where service station owner Joe Elliott launched his stamp scrip in January 1932. His "Anaheim Plan" was fairly widely reported at the time, and, as the Zylstra family had California connections, it is possible that Charles heard of it.¹⁹ Articles in *Business Week*, *The Survey*, and *The New Republic* over the summer of 1932 brought the idea of scrip to a wider audience.²⁰ It is likely that Zylstra saw one or more of these articles — or, perhaps, given his Dutch ancestry,

19. On Anaheim, see Jonathan Warner, "The Anaheim Scrip Plan," *Southern California Quarterly* 90 (2008), 307-25.

20. "Unwilling to Give Relief, Congress May Offer to Lend It," *Business Week*, 3/9/1932, 16-18; Joanna C. Colcord, "The West Is Different," *The Survey*, 6/1/1932, 221; Hans Cohnsen, "Wara," *The New Republic*, 8/10/1932, 338-39. Irving Fisher read Cohnsen's *New Republic* article and recruited Cohnsen to become his assistant on research into stamp scrip. The *New York Times* had a brief account of the "Wara" stamp scrip the previous year: "Coal Mine Operator Issues His Own Money," *New York Times*, 3/29/1931.

HOW STAMP SCRIP CIRCULATES

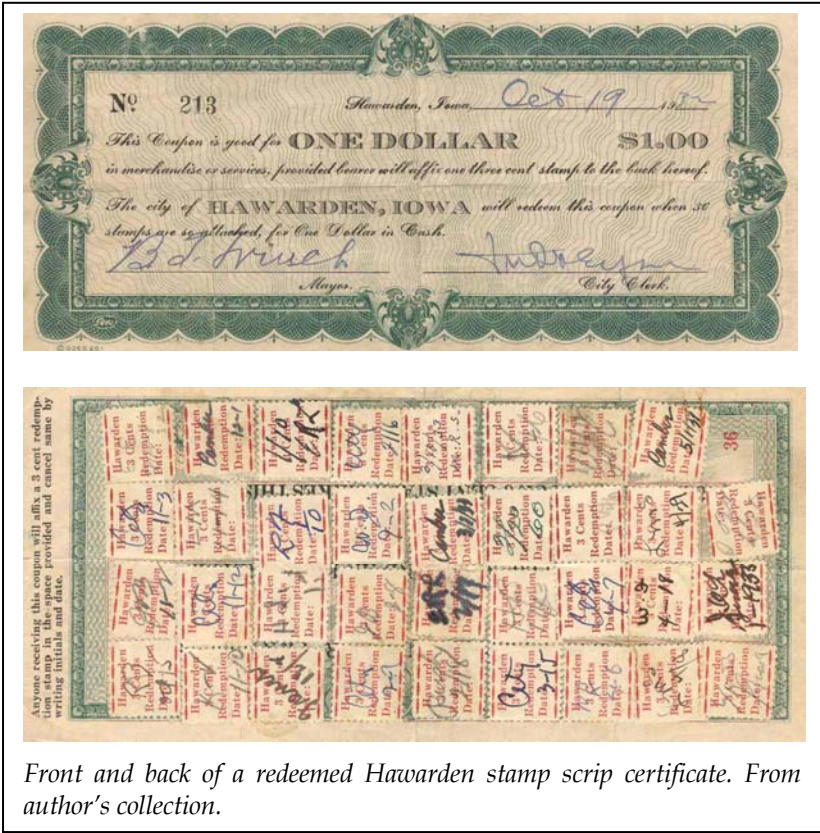


SOURCE: *Des Moines Register*, 12/4/1932, loosely based on the experiences of C. C. Clifton.

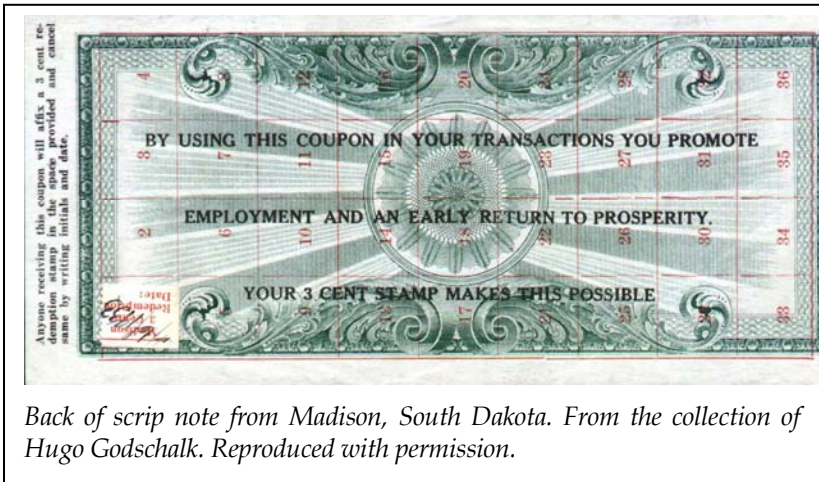
the piece in the *Pella Chronicle* suggesting something very similar to what became the Hawarden plan.²¹

Zylstra spent the summer of 1932 drumming up support for his idea, getting merchants and businesses in the town to sign a petition to the mayor and council. The petition called for the

21. *Pella Chronicle*, 7/7/1932.



issuance of scrip to pay the unemployed to do work of social value in the community. Zylstra noted that for the plan to succeed, the whole community had to be behind the idea; businesses had to agree to accept the certificates, and other community members had to accept them as well. For businesses, he argued, the cost of the three-cent stamp to use the certificate was a good bargain: were it not for the certificate, the transaction would not take place at all, and three cents on the dollar was what a business might reasonably have to spend on advertising anyway. In addition, the backs of the certificates pointed out that they had come into circulation as a means of helping the unemployed, and, by generating business, would promote a return to prosperity.



Back of scrip note from Madison, South Dakota. From the collection of Hugo Godschalk. Reproduced with permission.

The Hawarden plan was launched in October 1932, when the first group of unemployed men (all heads of household) received \$1.60 for a day's labor on projects for the city. This sum comprised 60 cents in cash and a one-dollar scrip certificate that could be used in local stores to purchase groceries or other necessities. To be valid, the certificate needed to have a three-cent stamp attached each time it was used.

The city clerk sold the stamps; anyone wanting to use scrip could buy them from his office. For the convenience of their customers, though, shopkeepers kept a stock of stamps on hand for use when customers presented certificates. The holder, then, would receive 97 cents worth of goods for the certificate (or a full dollar's worth if she produced the extra three cents for the stamp). When the certificate had 36 stamps on the back, the city office would redeem it for one dollar. The extra eight cents collected went towards advertising, printing, and administrative expenses.

The Hawarden plan was a marvelous success. A week after its launch, Irving Fisher heard about it as he was giving a lecture at Iowa State College in Ames. Fisher immediately abandoned his plans to travel on to Chicago and instead went to see for himself what was happening in Hawarden. Unfortunately, Zylstra was out of town on business when Fisher arrived, and the two

never met, although they did exchange a number of letters over the ensuing weeks.²²

Fisher's interest meant that the Hawarden plan received more than local attention. Reporters and the curious came to see for themselves: a long article in the *Des Moines Register* in early December brought the Hawarden experiment to the attention of other editors across the country and produced more visitors and a deluge of letters requesting details of the plan. For inquirers, Zylstra prepared a short booklet containing details of his idea and a selection of the articles that he had published in local papers.²³ Delegations from other communities, such as Elk Point, South Dakota, made the pilgrimage to visit Hawarden. A Pathe news crew recruited local people to play the role of unemployed workers joyfully receiving their certificates. Zylstra also featured, opening some of the piles of mail that he had received.²⁴ The newsreel was shown in movie theaters across the country, and more people wanted to learn about Hawarden's novel Depression-fighting idea. *New York Post* journalists Wayne Parrish and Wayne Weishaar visited Hawarden on their tour across the country to see how people were coping with the Depression. Their book, *Men Without Money*, published in early 1933, featured Hawarden in its first chapter, under the title "Hawarden

22. *Hawarden Independent*, 10/20/1932; Zylstra to Fisher, 10/28/1932 and 11/18/1932, written in reply to letters from Fisher. Copies are in the Irving Fisher Papers, 1932-1938, in the New York Public Library.

23. *Des Moines Register*, 12/4/1932; *Hawarden Independent*, 12/15/1932. A copy of Zylstra's booklet is in the Fisher Archives. It contains a short set of directions for putting a scrip plan into operation (with the offer to supply 500 certificates, sufficient stamps, and 50 sheets of direction for \$25); three of Zylstra's newspaper articles ("Offers Plan to Issue Scrip," from the *Le Mars Globe Post*, 7/28/1932, the *Hawarden Independent*, 8/4/1932, and elsewhere; "More on Scrip," *Hawarden Independent*, 8/18/1932; and "Can Idle Men Cure the Depression," *Sioux Center News*, 9/29/1932); and an affirming report from the *Hawarden Independent*, 10/20/1932.

24. *Hawarden Independent*, 12/22/1932. Somewhat breathlessly, it reported: "Stark drama, rivalled perhaps only by that portrayed in 'Life Begins' will be unfolded in a Pathe news reel which is to be shown in hundreds of motion picture theatres throughout the nation, beginning tonight."

Leads the Way.”²⁵ The result: yet more people came to visit and letters continued to flood in.²⁶

The publicity and large number of visitors probably guaranteed the success of the Hawarden plan. Most visitors spent money in the community and often took away one of the certificates as a souvenir. Those that visitors took never had to be redeemed by the city, so any stamps that were on them represented pure revenue for Hawarden. In addition, this reduced the number of certificates in circulation, and it is likely that those who visited and could not afford to buy a certificate to take home would at least buy and use one of them, thus speeding their circulation. Further, as Zylstra’s plan became increasingly well known, the certificates became collectors’ items. One numismatist offered to buy, at face value, all of the certificates after they had been redeemed. Thus the whole project would have cost the city absolutely nothing.²⁷

IN THE MONTHS after Hawarden launched its scrip plan, towns around Iowa, but predominantly in southern Iowa, started similar projects. Most aimed at providing relief to the unemployed; a few used scrip to pay existing workers. Lenox’s issue was to overcome an embarrassing funding gap when a court ordered the city council to pay to publish minutes of its meetings in the local paper.²⁸

Interest increased further after February 1933, when the Iowa legislature passed the Zylstra Act, which authorized counties to issue stamp scrip. Towns that already had scrip found it particularly helpful if the local bank was closed, either through local problems (Humeston) or because of the nationwide bank holiday announced by President Roosevelt immediately after his

25. Wayne Weishaar and Wayne Parrish, *Men without Money* (New York, 1933).

26. Stamp scrip caught on in several other states. See, for example, Loren Gatch, “‘This Is Not United States Currency’: Oklahoma’s Emergency Scrip Issues during the Banking Crisis of 1933,” *Chronicles of Oklahoma* 82 (2004), 168–99.

27. Oddly, the city council refused the offer, preferring to sell the certificates individually. *Hawarden Chronicle*, 1/12/1933.

28. See report in the *Lenox Time-Table*, 2/23/1933. Publication of the minutes had been suspended as an economy measure; publishing the backlog would cost \$250 the city did not have.

inauguration in March 1933.²⁹ As one paper put it, when the local bank was forced to close,

Farmers have products to sell, the laboring man is willing to work, the manufacturers are ready to supply the needs and retail merchants have goods on their shelves with transportation facilities to move anything. There is no shortage in the country of anything except a medium of exchange to make it possible for one industry to exchange its goods for something. The monetary system has completely broken down.³⁰

Another editor wryly noted, “Scrip money, which was not so popular a week ago, seems very much in demand now.”³¹

Unfortunately, the success of Hawarden’s plan was not fully transferable as a model for relief of the poor or for stimulating local economies. Outside of Hawarden, the experience of the small Iowa towns that issued scrip was distinctly mixed. In all, nearly 30 cities and 3 counties in Iowa issued stamp scrip between 1932 and 1934. Towns with 1,500–3,000 people and small issues seemed to be more successful: greater “local patriotism” – what is now called social capital – was deemed to be the reason. Towns, such as Humeston, that had fewer than 1,000 residents and few businesses found the going tougher. Merrill (pop. 605 in 1930) was probably right not to issue stamp scrip. The town’s city council thought that the costs of having the certificates and stamps prepared and paying royalties to Zylstra would make the whole thing uneconomical.³²

In general, almost every town or county that issued scrip faced problems with slow circulation, congestion, and, after a

29. The disruption caused by temporary bank closures was felt more keenly in larger communities. In small towns, such as Hawarden, there was sufficient trust between buyers and sellers that business continued to be conducted by personal checks. *Hawarden Independent*, 3/9/1933. In larger cities, such as Des Moines, clearinghouse certificates backed by blocked deposits made a temporary appearance. Elsewhere, such as in Colfax, local businesses produced temporary notes. These were rapidly redeemed as soon as the banks reopened: all of the Colfax scrip was redeemed within a week of the local bank reopening in late May. *Colfax Tribune*, 3/9/1933, 5/25/1933, 6/1/1933.

30. *New London Journal*, 3/9/1933.

31. *Sigourney Review*, 3/8/1933.

32. *Merrill Record*, 1/5/1933. Zylstra charged \$25 for a kit containing 500 scrip certificates, 750 sheets of stamps, and 50 leaflets explaining how the plan worked.

few months, the feeling that the scrip ought to be got rid of. This reaction is typical: "This script is circulating very slowly. Personally, I consider this plan was successful only in so far as it secured \$300.00 worth of immediate relief to the workers employed. As a business stimulator, I do not consider it is of much, if any, value."³³ The deficiencies of transaction stamp scrip are perhaps brought out most clearly in the case of Pella (pop. 3,326 in 1930).

THE PELLA Chamber of Commerce discussed the idea of issuing scrip on the Hawarden model in mid-December 1932. The result was an issue of \$500, half to be used by the city council and half to finance payment for public works via the Red Cross and other welfare organizations. The scrip, as in Hawarden, needed a three-cent stamp each time it was used and would be redeemed once 36 stamps had been affixed to the certificate.³⁴ The first certificates were issued early in 1933. The local newspaper exhorted the citizens of Pella to

do their share in helping to carry the burden by informing his or her merchant that scrip will be accepted in change. . . . [We] can't think of anyone who is not willing to donate three cents occasionally to give our unemployed work. In doing this, the purchaser will keep them from becoming objects of charity, which they do not want to be and which will be a greater drain on the community. There is no better way to solve our unemployment problem and, at the same time, contribute directly to the Welfare League than by accepting scrip. . . . Now is the time for all to get in the spirit and keep the scrip moving in the direction of prosperity. Bring it around the corner to our very door and watch things happen for our good. We can, if we will.³⁵

By early February the first issue of scrip had virtually all gone into circulation. The secretary of the Chamber of Commerce, Hugo Kuyper, wrote to Irving Fisher saying that things were going well, but that to ease the burden on the town's busi-

33. James L. Cameron, mayor of Eldora, Iowa, to Hans Cohnsen, 2/13/1933, Fisher Archives.

34. *Pella Chronicle*, 12/15/1932.

35. *Pella Chronicle*, 1/5/1933.

nesses the general public needed to be educated to accept the scrip. Kuyper thought that would be an uphill job and asked Fisher for suggestions on how to do so.³⁶

Kuyper indicated that the Chamber was considering a further issue of scrip. A visit from Zylstra, plus the enthusiasm of Earl Black of Black's Style Shoppe, who said it had been easy for him to pass on scrip he'd received, led to a vote to issue another \$1,000 worth of scrip. The following week the Chamber resolved that the new issue would be a transaction stamp scrip, requiring 50 two-cent stamps for redemption. Zylstra received \$25.63 for his visit and for providing the certificates.³⁷

At first all went well. The local newspaper thought that the new issue came at an opportune time, as the Pella banks remained closed.³⁸ By the fall of 1933, though, problems, especially congestion, were coming to the fore. Although the Chamber had arranged to set up a clearinghouse, scrip was tending to pile up there. Many merchants were willing to sell scrip to the clearinghouse for 96 cents, but few people wanted to buy it for 97 cents, despite Zylstra's predictions. He was on record as saying that the amount of scrip that would come back through the banks would be small. "With American salesmanship what it is, Mr. Zylstra is counting on the circumstance that as between selling a dollar's worth of goods and making a profit or simply cashing scrip at 96 cents as an accommodation, merchants are going to sell goods. 'Normal self-interest,' he said, 'will make the merchant see the advantage of selling goods.'"³⁹

But it wasn't happening that way. For the first time, the *Chronicle* struck a negative note. "We have scrip. What are we going to do with it to get it out of circulation? . . . The issue has moved so slowly that many are becoming impatient over it and asking, 'When will the end be? When will the issue be redeemed?'"

36. Minutes, Pella Chamber of Commerce, 2/9/1933, Pella Chamber of Commerce Archives, Pella; Kuyper to Fisher, 2/14/1933, Fisher Archives.

37. *Pella Chronicle*, 3/16/1933; Minutes, Pella Chamber of Commerce, 3/16/1933, 4/18/1934. The Scrip Committee had deadlocked over whether transactions or dated stamp scrip were the more appropriate type.

38. *Pella Chronicle*, 3/30/1933.

39. Minutes, Pella Chamber of Commerce, 9/18/1933, 9/21/1933; *New York Herald Tribune*, 2/26/1933.

. . . A comparatively small number of notes have been redeemed to date. Whose fault it is, we don't know. But somebody is loafing on the job."⁴⁰

That "somebody" continued to loaf. The Chamber tried a number of tactics to reduce the volume of notes, estimated at \$1,000 worth, held by the clearinghouse: it reduced the purchase price to 94 cents and the sale price to 96 cents plus the two-cent stamp.⁴¹ In addition, it sold nearly redeemed scrip at 99 cents on the dollar, with no stamp needed for the first transaction. The *Chronicle* struggled to understand why the scrip was not circulating.

What is it about scrip, stamp notes that makes them unacceptable to the public and some of our merchants? A business man remarks that everyone should be glad that we have scrip and he wonders what the result would be if we did not have it, what would take its place, with so little money in circulation. . . . As things are, it is far better to have \$1000 or \$2000 in stamp notes circulating than to not have that medium of exchange. Everybody ought to co-operate in the scrip campaign, buy it, stamp it, buy with it and keep it moving. Why not, when 50 cents can be saved on every \$25.00 purchase?⁴²

But, of course, that was not how the people of Pella saw it. As circulation of the scrip continued to be very slow, the Chamber began to discuss ways of winding up the project. The *Chronicle* suggested a bond issue; others wanted to reduce the number of notes by replacing the scrip issue with a new one to represent the amount still outstanding. The Chamber made no progress, and the mayor complained that merchants seemed to be using the scrip only to pay their bills to the city. Ultimately, the city responded by refusing to accept scrip for the payment of utility bills, to the chagrin of the Chamber. The Stamp Note Committee, refreshed with new members in August 1935, had to devise a

40. *Pella Chronicle*, 10/5/1933. In fact, no notes of the second issue had yet been redeemed. The first, presented for payment by the still optimistic Earl Black, came in in mid-October. *Pella Chronicle*, 10/19/1933.

41. Minutes, Pella Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors, 11/8/1933; *Pella Chronicle*, 11/16/1933. Kuyper reported that the city held most of the remaining \$500 of the scrip, so the amount still in circulation was tiny.

42. *Pella Chronicle*, 11/23/1933.

plan to redeem the remaining scrip. Again, they made no significant progress.⁴³

The Pella scrip, copying Hawarden, had printed on it the expiration date of January 1, 1936. But, as the *Chronicle* noted, that did not mean that the scrip became redeemable on that date: the notes remained in circulation. A suggestion was made that merchants pay farmers in scrip at more than the market price for chickens and eggs. "This idea met with enthusiastic response, but action was postponed." A count turned up 361 notes still in circulation; the Stamp Note Committee thought that up to another 200 could still be stashed away somewhere.⁴⁴

Another audit of the scrip still in circulation in July 1936 revealed a total of 625 notes still unredeemed. The Chamber seemed unable to devise a plan to bring the project to a conclusion. Although it agreed that the issue should be replaced by a new dated scrip issue requiring a weekly stamp, nothing came of the suggestion.⁴⁵ Frustration grew. Some members of the Chamber refused to pay their dues until the scrip issue was resolved, and, because the date of redemption was past, many no longer felt any obligation to circulate it further. After much discussion, Chamber members voted to replace the old committee with a new one, with instructions to "hop to it."⁴⁶

43. *Pella Chronicle*, 5/10/1934, 6/21/1934; Minutes, Pella Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors, 11/28/1934, 7/8/1935, 8/29/1935; Minutes, Pella Chamber of Commerce, 5/10/1934, 7/11/1935, 9/12/1935. In the run-up to Christmas, shoppers received a lottery ticket for each 25¢ of purchase, with winners drawn on three consecutive Saturdays. Minutes, Pella Chamber of Commerce, 11/19/1935. The winners' prizes were paid in scrip, with \$100 worth allocated for that purpose. The Chamber thanked the *Chronicle* for its help with publicizing this and printing the tickets for free. The net cost to the Chamber was \$35.50. Minutes, Pella Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors, 1/1/1936.

44. Minutes, Pella Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors, 1/1/1936; *Pella Chronicle*, 1/1/1936, 1/19/1936, 1/23/1936. The estimates of outstanding notes seem to have been overly conservative.

45. Minutes, Pella Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors, 6/18/1936; Minutes, Pella Chamber of Commerce, 6/25/1936. Two months later the Chamber countermanded the decision to issue dated scrip "in view of the fact that [the committee] had made no progress." Minutes, Pella Chamber of Commerce, 8/27/1936.

46. *Pella Chronicle*, 9/3/1936. See also the Pella Chamber of Commerce's newsletter, *The Informer*, undated (probably early September, 1936), Pella Chamber of Commerce Archives.

But the new committee had no more success than the old one. It ordered a canvass of the amount of outstanding scrip in September 1936, but nothing happened as a result. Not until eight months later, following another canvass, did the Chamber take any serious action. It solicited donations from its members to redeem the outstanding notes. The Chamber told the public to turn in the remaining scrip certificates by June 14 for a receipt, which would be paid in cash as soon as the necessary donations had been received.⁴⁷

It was necessary to solicit further donations, but the miracle happened.

There is general rejoicing around Pella that the stamp notes or scrip are in the process of being retired. This form of exchange came in to being when the depression was at its height, and it served a good purpose. It may be said here though that there never was 100 per cent co-operation and not all the rules of compliance were carried out. There is no question that there were hundreds of transactions without attaching the required stamp which naturally slowed up circulation. The date of retirement having arrived, some merchants refused to accept scrip. This made it embarrassing to the holder of stamp notes. Merchants with the largest volume of city business got the worst end of the bargain and were literally loaded down with scrip. Then, too, the scrip seemed to move around in a circle, going from one concern to the other and back again. It is well that the chamber of commerce has taken steps to retire it.

And so the longest-lived stamp scrip project in Iowa finally came to an end. The *Chronicle* wrote that, locally, nothing had “so befuddled the minds of people as the stamp notes.”⁴⁸

GIVEN PELLA’S EXPERIENCE, one might predict that bigger stamp scrip issues were unlikely to succeed, especially if communities chose Zylstra’s transactions scrip. The county scrip issued in 1933–34 provides a test of this hypothesis.

47. Minutes, Pella Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors, 9/15/1936, 5/27/1937; *Pella Chronicle*, 6/3/1937.

48. Minutes, Pella Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors, 6/10/1937; *Pella Chronicle*, 6/10/1937, 7/16/1937. See also *The Informer*, undated (probably early June 1937).

Scrip enthusiasts in Hawarden mooted the idea of extending stamp scrip to counties soon after the launch of the Hawarden plan. The Hawarden Chamber of Commerce approached the Sioux County supervisors in November 1932. Although the supervisors rejected any issue of scrip, Zylstra's friends continued to advocate for it around the county.⁴⁹

Charles Zylstra himself was an ambitious man. As many ambitious men had done before him, he chose to go into politics, comfortably winning the Sioux County seat in the Iowa House in November 1932 – the first Democrat to win in Sioux County since the late nineteenth century.⁵⁰

When the Iowa legislature convened in early January 1933, Zylstra brought forward a bill to allow counties to issue scrip as a means of poor relief. His idea intrigued his fellow legislators, and reaction was generally supportive. The act proposed to give the board of supervisors of a county the option of introducing scrip if 2 percent of voters or 51 percent of merchants in the county asked for it.⁵¹

Under the county plans, 50 two-cent stamps had to be affixed to the scrip for redemption.⁵² Banks had the right to accept the stamp notes in amounts of \$25 or greater, for 96 cents per dollar note in cash, and had no obligation to affix a stamp (marking the last stamp “cashed” to explain the break in initials). They could then pass the notes on to their customers at 97 cents. In exchange for this new revenue source, the act required banks to keep a stock of the redemption stamps to sell to their customers. Banks could also turn in scrip to the county treasurer at 97 cents; this discount was supposed to cover printing and other administrative costs. Having received back the scrip, the county could then use it instead of cash to pay county and school district employees.

49. *Alton Democrat*, 11/18/1932, 11/25/1932; *Sioux County Index*, 12/23/1932.

50. Initially he was thought to be the first ever; then an Alton pioneer alerted the *Alton Democrat* (11/18/1932) to the election of a Democrat back in 1891.

51. *Laws of Iowa*, 1933, chap. 103, pp. 129–30, where the law is identified as “An Act to provide a plan for the relief of poor and unemployed people.” See also, for example, the *Corydon Times-Republican*, 2/2/1933, syndicated to other newspapers in south-central Iowa.

52. It was argued that 3¢ was too much, given the low rate of profit for many businesses at the time. See a letter from a Hawarden official to J. J. McManus, Winneshiek County Board of Supervisors, in *Decorah Journal*, 2/28/1933.

Further provisions of the act required minimum pay rates (25 cents per hour) for work carried out for scrip and specified who was eligible for work under the plan. Counties had the right to use the stamp note plan as a substitute for all other forms of poor relief. The state would print the notes and provide them to the counties at cost; Zylstra agreed to forgo any royalties and to surrender his copyright on scrip to the state.⁵³

The bill received bipartisan support in both the House and the Senate and passed with over 80 percent approval. "One senator called up a store in Hawarden at random and asked the merchant what he thought of the scrip money plan. The merchant replied enthusiastically that it was working out splendidly in every respect. Upon reporting his telephone call and the result, the senate took up action on the bill and adopted it without delay."⁵⁴

But all was not sweetness and light. The *Hawarden Independent* had turned against the idea of scrip. Its editor, Merle Stone, wrote that the bill had been rushed through the legislature (the fact that the House gave it overwhelming support served only to demonstrate, in Stone's opinion, that few members had read it) and was highly defective. Although Hawarden had benefited from the publicity resulting from its issue, that would not be the case generally for all communities. In fact, this "unsound scheme . . . has already gone through the experimental stage and found sadly wanting." Stone complained specifically that the bill did not define "established merchants"; those who would seldom see a single scrip certificate could cheerfully petition for an issue, knowing that they would avoid the costs. He added that a scrip issue under the bill would prevent the county from making any tax levy for poor relief; and that many businesses, particularly chain stores, non-local utility companies, and railroads, would refuse to accept the scrip and so avoid the costs. He concluded, "It seems little short of amazing that a legislative body in Iowa should 'fall' for it."⁵⁵

53. *Laws of Iowa*, 1933, chap. 103, pp. 129–30. As the county scrip notes bear Zylstra's copyright notice, this appears not to have happened; but he did waive the right to receive any payment from the state for the county scrip notes.

54. *Alton Democrat*, 3/3/1933.

55. *Hawarden Independent*, 2/23/1933.

But fall for it they did, perhaps concluding, along with more Democrat-leaning newspapers, that a prophet is without honor only within his home district.⁵⁶ Zylstra's bill was signed into law on February 28, 1933.⁵⁷ Within a week, Franklin Roosevelt had been inaugurated as president and had declared a nationwide bank holiday, surely a wonderful opportunity to try scrip. But the act seemed to be badly worded and imprecise; although it was to be in operation for only two years, within twelve months it produced at least three court cases and a bill to repeal it.

In a number of counties, organizations representing the unemployed lobbied hard for the issue of scrip and managed to amass the signatures of 2 percent of the electorate. Getting the support of 51 percent of a county's businesses was far more difficult. Despite the efforts of Zylstra and Sioux County Senator G. E. Roelofs, who organized a rally in support of scrip in Orange City (the Sioux County seat) in early March, the Sioux County Board of Supervisors trod carefully; after consulting with merchants from the county's towns and hearing from Merle Stone about the problems of circulation, they decided against it.⁵⁸ They were probably wise to do so: Where support for scrip was not wholehearted, disaster was likely, as the issue in Polk County and the battle over issuing it in Pottawattamie County both demonstrate.

Charles Zylstra visited Pottawattamie County in April 1933 to whip up support for an issue. He acknowledged that scrip was proving unpopular in places where Reconstruction Finance Corporation (RFC) funds were flowing freely but claimed that it was well received by businessmen where cash was in short supply. Initially, the county supervisors unanimously rejected the idea of issuing scrip; then they revisited the issue but, to the chagrin of 300 unemployed people crowding the lawn outside

56. See reports on the bill's passing in the *Sioux Center News*, 3/2/1933, and the *Alton Democrat*, 3/3/1933.

57. *Laws of Iowa*, 1933, chap. 103, pp. 129–30. The full text was also published in the *Hawarden Chronicle* and the *Boyden Reporter*, 3/9/1933.

58. *Alton Democrat*, 3/10/1933; Minutes, Sioux County Board of Supervisors, 3/9/1933, 3/16/1933. Merle Stone's editorial in the *Hawarden Independent*, 2/23/1933, probably influenced their decision.

the courthouse, insisted on demonstrated support from merchants.⁵⁹ The county Public Welfare Union (PWU) duly collected merchants' signatures and presented them to the supervisors. Roy Harrop of the PWU predicted that if scrip were not issued the unemployed people waiting for scrip-financed work would break into stores to get food to eat. "I am not making any threats but from the mood of that mob out in front you will have to bring the militia inside of a week," he declared. Cowed, the board of supervisors decided to go ahead and issue \$10,000 in scrip. But setting up the required County Stamp Note Committee proved challenging, as no one wanted to serve. When the board failed to ask his preferred candidate, Harrop thanked the council for the "beautiful slap in the face." In any case, opposition from a group of merchants led the committee to decide not to issue any scrip after all. Frustrated, the PWU sued the Stamp Note Committee to compel it to issue scrip.⁶⁰ When the lawsuit failed, Harrop considered an appeal to the state supreme court, but then finally realized the hopelessness of the case. And so Pottawattamie County never used stamp scrip.

IN VIEW of Polk County's trauma with county scrip, Pottawattamie County should perhaps have counted its blessings in having to deal only with Mr. Harrop. Polk, the most populous of Iowa's 99 counties, hosted the largest county stamp scrip issue in Iowa. At the start of the bank holiday, County Supervisor E. R. Bennett announced that Polk County was prepared to issue scrip under the Zylstra bill, if necessary. By the end of the month, enough merchants had given the necessary assurances, and 50,000 certificates were ordered, out of the \$175,000 that Polk County was entitled to issue. According to Charles Saverucle, president of the Home-Owned Business Association, more than 1,400 Des Moines businesses, representing 80 percent

59. *Council Bluffs Nonpareil*, 5/1/1933, 5/15/1933, 6/2/1933; Minutes, Pottawattamie County Board of Supervisors, 5/25/1933 and 6/2/1933, as published in the *Avoca Journal-Herald*, 5/25/1933; Minutes, Pottawattamie County Board of Supervisors, 6/2/1933, as published in the *Avoca Journal-Herald*, 6/8/1933.

60. *Council Bluffs Nonpareil*, 6/15/1933, 6/16/1933, 6/17/1933, 6/28/1933, 7/4/1933; Minutes, Pottawattamie County Board of Supervisors, 6/16/1933, as published in the *Avoca Journal-Herald*, 7/6/1933.

of wholesalers, jobbers, and retailers, had agreed to accept the scrip.⁶¹

But there was also plenty of opposition. The president of the Iowa State Federation of Labor, J. C. Lewis, argued before the Des Moines City Council that “every American wage earner should be paid in cash,” as workers on relief projects being paid in scrip were earning only just over half the union wage. Fifty members of the Retail Merchants Bureau who had originally signed on now said that they would not accept scrip as long as RFC funds were available to pay for work by the unemployed. The League of Unemployed failed in a legal attempt to prevent any further use of scrip by the city; the court said that it lacked standing to bring such an action.⁶²

But over the next several months requests for scrip came from the city council for several purposes: to clean up rubbish dumps (\$1,500), to grade roads (\$2,000), to install a swimming pool (\$1,000), and to build a hangar at the city airport. Polk County decided to use \$3,000 of “recycled” certificates to pay county employees. Those certificates could be bought from banks for 97 cents, thus saving the county one cent on each dollar, even after it had affixed the two-cent stamp. Five percent of county merchandise warrants were paid in scrip.⁶³

By mid-October, Polk County had issued \$125,000 of scrip, but only one note had been submitted for redemption (and that had been rushed through the required 50 transactions as an exercise by a group of young East Des Moines businessmen).⁶⁴ Only \$11,000 of stamps had been sold. Scrip proponents pointed out that as long as the stamp notes were out circulating, they were working. One problem seemed to be that merchants preferred to keep the scrip until they had \$25 and then cash it at the bank rather than trying to use it or embarrassing their customers by giving it out in change.⁶⁵

61. *Des Moines Tribune*, 3/4/1933, 3/29/1933.

62. *Des Moines Tribune*, 5/1/1933, 5/3/1933.

63. *Des Moines Tribune*, 7/6/1933, 7/20/1933, 7/29/1933; *Des Moines Register*, 8/3/1933.

64. Another note was brought in to the redemption office — but at the last minute, the holder decided to keep it as a souvenir.

65. *Des Moines Register*, 10/16/1933.

The scrip was becoming a frustration to businesses. In September R. W. Schaub, a Des Moines builder, filed suit against the Polk County Board of Supervisors and others, arguing that the Zylstra Act violated both the U.S. and Iowa constitutions by purporting to allow the emission of bills of credit as a form of legal tender, powers that are reserved for the state and federal governments. He ended his 15-point indictment with a couple of catch-all complaints:

14. That the act is illegal because the scrip is "spurious and contrary to all sound principles of banking, is fiat and bogus money and not legal tender, neither is it a specific promise to pay on a certain date nor by any party or parties legally bound to pay."

15. That the act's language is indefinite, and that the act is economically unsound and "contrary to all sound business principles."⁶⁶

Although the case was postponed indefinitely, the writing was on the wall.

At the start of the 1933–34 special legislative session, state senator George A. Wilson of Des Moines introduced a bill to wind up the use of stamp scrip by counties, requiring them to issue bonds to redeem the scrip. Wilson argued that scrip had proven to be a costly experiment and that Polk County, at least, was anxious to divorce itself from it as quickly as possible.⁶⁷ Once the mandating "must" redeem the scrip was changed to a permissive authorizing "may," even Zylstra supported the bill.

Polk County was now able to redeem its scrip, but it took a considerable loss in the process. A bond issue takes a while to prepare; meanwhile, scrip was piling up in the Des Moines treasurer's office. The county paid its workers with some, and each month the city would try to pay half of its water bill in scrip, but each time the water board refused to accept the scrip and returned it. By early March 1934, \$7,762 in returned scrip was held by the city, stored bundled in newspaper in the treasurer's office. Once the supervisors had approved the bond issue for redemption, scrip received by the treasurer's office was stamped "canceled" and then given back to the holder to circulate with-

66. *Des Moines Register*, 9/10/1933.

67. *Sioux City Journal*, 12/30/1933.

out the need for more stamps. Having received authorization to redeem the issue, the treasurer announced that, starting April 16, the canceled scrip would be exchangeable for cash.⁶⁸ By the end of May, it was all over, to everyone's relief.

Was it, then, impossible that county scrip could work? The more modest issue in Cass County (along with Winneshiek, the only other counties to ask for scrip under the 1933 act) suggests that problems might be no greater than with municipal issues.

CASS COUNTY was interested in issuing scrip. The County Poor Fund was effectively insolvent after a Des Moines company, citing the "unsettled financial conditions," pulled out of a deal to take up \$32,500 of the county's warrants.⁶⁹ The board of supervisors had received a petition, signed by more than the required 51 percent of the county's established merchants, suggesting widespread support. The board voted 4-1 on Monday, March 6 (the first working day of the Roosevelt bank holiday) for an issue of \$1,500 of scrip, to be used as soon as the State Printing House had sent the first 500 one-dollar certificates. The first unemployed men who expected to be paid in scrip went to work plastering a room at the County Farm. The following day the Atlantic City Council decided to ask for \$1,000 of the scrip to use for public work projects on the city's streets.⁷⁰

It took over three weeks for the scrip certificates to arrive. The State Printing House evidently was not well prepared to meet the requirements of the Zylstra Act — further evidence of the rushed nature of the legislation. The *News-Telegraph* reported on March 16 that the printing would take place that day or the next; then that the certificates would arrive on March 21; then on March 28. They finally reached Atlantic on March 31, delayed by the difficulty of printing the stamps and finding an adhesive that would keep them affixed to the certificate. But once the scrip arrived, men could be set to work. Some of the

68. *Decorah Journal*, 6/6/1934; *Sioux Center News* (reporting an item in the *Des Moines Register*), 8/3/1933; *Des Moines Register*, 2/17/1934, 3/2/1934, 4/16/1934.

69. *Atlantic News-Telegraph*, 3/7/1933.

70. *Atlantic News-Telegraph*, 3/8/1933.

first received \$350 in scrip, “mighty glad to get the work” to demolish the burnt-out courthouse.⁷¹

To provide an outlet for the scrip, and to prevent its piling up, the county treasurer acted as clearinghouse, standing ready to buy back unwanted scrip. An early sign that things were not going as well as had been hoped was that much of the scrip was channeled through the treasurer. One result was that the county, which had issued about \$3,000 of certificates by the end of April, vowed to hold off any further issue until the problem of the apparent glut had sorted itself out. That apparently happened, as the supervisors ordered another \$2,500 in scrip in mid-May. The Griswold town council asked for, and received, \$300 in scrip after funds from the RFC failed to materialize on time. Over the succeeding months, Cass County slowly placed about \$1,000 of the rest into circulation. In November, the county treasurer began to pay 20 percent of the salary of all county employees in scrip — a technique, unpopular with the recipients, learned from Polk County. In January 1934, when the Atlantic City Council applied for \$500 more in scrip, it was told that the board of supervisors had decided not to put out any new scrip until all the original issue, totaling \$4,400, had been redeemed.⁷²

The Wilson bill gave Cass County a convenient way out of issuing more scrip, but in any case the need had passed. The county raised some money by selling redeemed scrip as souvenirs at 25¢ per certificate, but not as much as the \$950 the treasurer was hoping for. Final redemption was in June 1935.⁷³

IRVING FISHER thought that stamp scrip should be of the type that Gesell had originally suggested: that a stamp should be required each week (or fortnight, or month), rather than with each transaction, which was Zylstra’s approach. When Fisher heard that Zylstra’s bill mandated transactions stamp scrip, he immediately had his research assistant, Hans Cohrsen, send a

71. *Atlantic News-Telegraph*, 3/16/1933, 3/20/1933; *Griswold American*, 4/5/1933.

72. *Atlantic News-Telegraph*, 4/29/1933, 1/10/1934; *Griswold American*, 5/31/1933; *Des Moines Register*, 11/2/1933.

73. *Atlantic New-Telegraph*, 11/7/1933; Minutes, Cass County Board of Supervisors, 6/10/1935. I am grateful to Phil Chinitz of Atlantic for this latter reference.

telegram and letter to urge the use of the dated variety, but by the time the correspondence arrived, the bill had already passed.⁷⁴ Although Rock Rapids, along with Mason City, required that a stamp be affixed if the scrip were idle for too long, only one town in Iowa adopted Fisher's approach from the outset.

Discussion of scrip in Red Oak (pop. 5,778 in 1930) began in early 1933, and the city issued its first scrip on March 11. Each dollar certificate had spaces for 52 two-cent stamps: "One stamp must be affixed each Wednesday at midnight by the holder of the certificate at that time, thus making Wednesday scrip transactions rapid and the scrip 'hot.'"⁷⁵

The first stamp was due at 12:01 a.m. on Wednesday, March 15, so the scrip could circulate without cost for its first few days. In another innovation, farmers received a significant part of the scrip issue for their produce, giving them prices some 20 percent above those prevailing at the time. The foodstuffs so acquired would then be sold and the proceeds added to the fund to redeem the scrip.

As with most scrip plans, the initial reaction was enthusiastic. Merchants who had originally avoided signing up clamored to participate as the first scrip started circulating. The Chamber of Commerce agreed to purchase scrip (at a discount) if a merchant worried that he was getting too much of it. Not surprisingly, the threat of having to pay for a stamp on Wednesday generated a lot of business on Tuesdays, which was otherwise a slow day for merchants.

The initial large issue (of \$750 over three days — \$559 on the first day alone), however, led to some scrip indigestion and the hasty establishment of a clearinghouse committee to sort out the problem. "We discovered that many business men were not using discretion in the use of scrip," members of the committee

74. Cohrssen mentions this in his letter of February 28, 1933, to Charles H. Barber of Mason City (copy in the Lester Milligan Archives, Mason City Public Library, Mason City). Earl Dean, who represented Cerro Gordo County in the Iowa House, had mailed a copy of the text of Zylstra's bill to Fisher. The telegram and letter were dispatched on February 27, after the bill had already completed its stages in the House.

75. *Red Oak Express*, 2/23/1933. I am grateful to Rachel Clemens for transcribing some of the articles from the *Red Oak Express* referred to in this section.

said. "The men were looking for a 'dumping ground' for stamp money and instead of distributing it equally in various places they unloaded it as soon as possible at the first opportunity."⁷⁶

By April, more problems surfaced, as merchants discovered that they were the ones who usually held most of the scrip come stamping time. The Chamber of Commerce endorsed a suggestion that merchants be allowed to give change for scrip if they wanted to and decided to call in \$150 of the issue. The problem was that a "lack of co-operation" by some of the businesses had "somewhat dimmed the scrip's real value"; the Chamber felt it necessary to point out that "scrip is not contaminating — it isn't a disease."⁷⁷

The scrip continued to be used through the summer, gradually becoming more and more of a nuisance, as real money began to appear and as more and more businesses threatened to stop accepting it. In October the Chamber of Commerce decided to retire the rest of the issue. If the stamp due on October 18 had been affixed, the scrip could be turned in for redemption at face value over the following month, and people would then have the option of buying the redeemed scrip as a souvenir for 25 cents. The city had sold \$374 of stamps, leaving a shortfall of \$176 to redeem the \$550 then outstanding, but merchants quickly agreed to underwrite most of that. Souvenir sales probably raised the rest of the necessary funds, and a small amount of scrip (\$40 or less) was never presented for redemption.⁷⁸ Although Red Oak's experience with dated stamp scrip ended successfully, the fact that merchants wanted to opt out of the weekly game of musical chairs suggests that Fisher's dated stamp scrip was not without problems.

Perhaps the transaction and dated versions could be combined to good effect? The evidence suggests that such a hybrid was the most successful form of stamp scrip issued in Iowa. Rock Rapids's issue was small and successful. Mason City's much larger issue led to some scrip indigestion but ultimately achieved its aims.

76. *Red Oak Express*, 3/16/1933.

77. *Red Oak Express*, 4/6/1933.

78. *Red Oak Express*, 10/19/1933.

ROCK RAPIDS (pop. 2,221 in 1930) was the first Iowa town to follow Hawarden's lead in issuing scrip. A delegation made the 45-mile trip to Hawarden in early November and reported back on the situation there. One thing was evident: to succeed, the plan required wholehearted cooperation and intelligent guidance. Regulation could not ensure success, which depended instead on the attitude of the townspeople.⁷⁹

Instead of a one-dollar certificate requiring 36 three-cent stamps, Rock Rapids opted for an issue of 500 fifty-cent certificates, each requiring 54 one-cent stamps for redemption. An additional one-cent stamp had to be affixed if the scrip was unused for seven days, thereby producing perhaps the best version of stamp scrip — a hybrid between the transaction and dated varieties. The dated element meant that the issue would keep circulating and would accommodate \$13,500 of transactions in little more than a year. The rates of pay — \$1.60 for an eight-hour day, paid as one dollar in scrip and 60 cents in cash — were identical to those in Hawarden.

Demands for relief were smaller in Rock Rapids; initially, only 14 men were employed using the scrip. A newspaper editorial exhorted merchants to circulate it, and the city also expressed concerns that it was circulating too slowly. But the community seems to have gotten the message; in February the paper reported that it was moving at a good rate. The city had sold \$217 in stamps to that point, needing just \$33 more to be sold to pay for the redemption of the issue. On average, each certificate had received a new stamp every four days.⁸⁰

As news of its success with stamp scrip got out, Rock Rapids began to receive delegations interested in copying its version of the plan.⁸¹ Even so, its plan was not without problems of its own. In a letter to Hans Cohrssen, W. F. Gingrich, the Rock Rapids superintendent of municipal public utilities and originator of the plan, wrote,

79. *Lyon County Reporter*, 11/10/1932.

80. *Lyon County Reporter*, 11/24/1932, 1/1/1933, 2/9/1933.

81. Officials from Luverne, Minnesota, visited in December. Although Luverne's mayor and council were in favor of adopting the plan, local merchants were not. See reports in the *Rock County [Minnesota] Star*, 12/2/1932 and 12/9/1932.

The difficulties experienced are that people generally fail to get back of it as they should, in other words, when the merchant who first receives the scrip from the worker attempts to pass it out as change he finds that people generally are reluctant to accept it, therefore the merchant uses what he can among his own employees and turns the balance back to the city in payment for his electric light, heating and water bills, thus converting the scrip into cash which in turn must be paid out by the city as cash to the worker, thereby to some extent defeating the purpose of the scrip.⁸²

But the scrip continued to circulate and started to come in for redemption; the first pieces were sold to Chase National Bank in New York, which was building a collection of scrip for display. The *Lyon County Reporter* claimed that the success of the plan seemed to be assured.⁸³

A snowstorm in late March gave scrip a last cheer, as Rock Rapids used it to pay workers to clear the streets.

The blizzard of Saturday and Sunday demonstrated the value of scrip in towns where money has been more or less scarce. Any community where the treasury has been depleted during these hard times would have hesitated before they put crews at work clearing away the drifts, not knowing where the money was to come from with which to pay the laborers. Here in Rock Rapids there was no hesitation. Crews were out early shoveling snow and making it possible for residents to get about during the day. Had the city been "broke," this would have been impossible. So the scrip plan helped in two ways. It put men to work who would otherwise have been idle and cleared the streets so they were passable.⁸⁴

All in all, scrip served Rock Rapids well, and the town paid off all the scrip submitted for redemption by mid-1933, just as federal money started to arrive.

THE LARGEST of Iowa's municipal scrip issues was Mason City's (pop. 23,000 in 1930): 10,000 one-dollar certificates. The impetus came from Colonel Hanford MacNider, a former national commander of the American Legion and recently retired

82. W. F. Gingrich to Hans Cahrssen, 2/13/1933, Fisher Archives.

83. *Lyon County Reporter*, 3/16/1933.

84. *Lyon County Leader*, 3/23/1933.

as U.S. Minister to Canada. Believing, as President Hoover had, in the virtues of cooperation and minimal government compulsion, MacNider found the idea of scrip appealing. The local Chamber of Commerce agreed, and in January 1933 established a subcommittee to investigate the feasibility of issuing scrip. The committee did its job carefully, sending letters to Irving Fisher and to Anaheim and Hawarden to get information on how scrip worked there. The upbeat replies the committee received encouraged it to proceed.⁸⁵

Concurrently, there was a competition to find the best work projects. The local newspaper reported on many of the suggestions. Construction of new roads, and the diversion of old ones, were the favorite suggestions; others included the construction of a municipal swimming pool and using the money to subsidize wages, with the aim of attracting new business to the town.⁸⁶ The committee's report spelled out the need for a clearinghouse mechanism. It also estimated that a \$10,000 issue would represent about 5 percent of the city's business if each one-dollar certificate turned over once per week.⁸⁷

Mason City refused to be rushed into issuing scrip. In the end, it was not placed into circulation until May, and great care was taken to try to avoid what its promoters saw as errors in other plans elsewhere. The one-dollar certificates required that a two-cent stamp be attached each Wednesday and for every transaction, thus speeding up circulation without causing a "musical chairs" effect. The net result was that the scrip turned over twice per week on average, increasing local business by \$20,000 per week. Some of the transactions were paying old bills: with cash, it makes sense to delay payment; with scrip, it makes sense to pay bills when there is a need to put on a stamp, so some bills were settled even before they became due.

85. Report on the Mason City scrip plan, undated typescript (written while it was still in operation), Milligan Archives; conversation with Terry Harrison, archivist in Mason City, August 2004. For MacNider's views, see also *Mason City Globe-Gazette*, 2/22/1933 and 3/22/1933.

86. *Mason City Globe-Gazette*, beginning 1/19/1933. The column ran almost daily for a month, producing more than 20 different suggestions.

87. *Mason City Globe-Gazette*, 2/22/1933.

Most of the town's 400 merchants agreed to accept the scrip and pledged that, if necessary, they would pay for the issue's redemption; in fact, the pledges backed the issue twice over. The committee overseeing the issue used one of the town's banks as a clearinghouse, which bought up scrip from those who had too much and (a harder job) sold it on to those who had little but who were willing to use it.⁸⁸

An average of 25 men were employed three days per week (to spread the benefits to as many as possible) and were paid 30 cents per hour in scrip.⁸⁹ Ultimately, the city chose a road-building project because of its potential to benefit the city's businesses. "Mason City was frankly selfish in constructing this experimental type of road for a lot of her employment depends upon cement, sand, and gravel and if it can be promoted as a surface for secondary and lighter travelled roads, it will help employment in Mason City through the stimulation or the sale of Mason City products."⁹⁰

The project initially seemed very successful: the city issued the last of the \$10,000 in scrip on July 8. As it required 52 stamps for redemption, this meant that all of the issue would complete its rounds and be ready for redemption by July 1934. Holders of a completely stamped certificate had a month to turn it in for redemption; so August 7, 1934, would theoretically see Mason City scrip-free. "It is an interesting experiment that will go down in history as one of the features of the 'great depression.' A good deal of the scrip is already being picked up by collectors and it is thought probable that the value of that outstanding will amount to considerably more than \$1.00 shortly after the issue is out of circulation."⁹¹

But appearances were deceptive. Lester Milligan, secretary of the Chamber of Commerce, writing soon after the project was completed, produced a more skeptical report. The scrip did not

88. *Mason City Globe-Gazette*, 3/23/1933.

89. *Mason City Globe-Gazette*, 4/20/1933.

90. Lester Milligan, undated typescript report, Milligan Archives. The road is still known as the Scrip Road and is still used, but is now in desperate need of repairs. See Elvins, "Scrip Money and Slump Cures," 235; and *Mason City Globe-Gazette*, 10/29/2010.

91. Milligan, undated typescript report, p.3, Milligan Archives.

come in for redemption as quickly as expected. Most scrip transactions were concentrated with just a few merchants: "Professional men and others seldom, if ever, saw it. A few stores got more than their fair share." As a result,

It became necessary to establish a clearing house. The scrip committee each week bought up from various firms the excess over what they could put into circulation through payment of their own bills. Some loyal firms, including one large manufacturer, agreed to purchase it from the clearing house twice each month and start it going again through payrolls and other bills. But . . . the scrip would have met its Waterloo . . . had not the Board of Education come to bat and bought enough to pay the school teachers ten percent of their salaries.⁹²

In the end, community loyalty brought the project to a successful conclusion, despite bookkeepers who "cursed and raved" and "blamed all of their mistakes on scrip." People often evaded the requirement to put a stamp on the certificate each time it was used (opting instead to put on just one per week), and stamps that had been attached often fell off. As a result,

It was not until August, one year and thirty days after date of the last issue that the game was finished. And no one wanted to play again. It had proven through experience that the stuff would not circulate rapidly. Its circulation had been limited, proven by the fact that 49 firms bought and paid for \$6,966.00 of the \$10,620.22 worth of stamps sold. Not only did they pay the penalty, but so did their employees who took regularly from ten to twenty-five per cent of their payrolls in scrip and, of course, paid a correspondingly heavy tax for stamps. Most of the community never saw it and carried no share of the burden. And it was a general nuisance, provocative of argument and ill feeling between buyer and seller, and of errors in bookkeeping and accounting.⁹³

And yet, after all the arm-twisting, the plan was successful in achieving its stated aims. Despite the unequal burden placed on

92. Lester Milligan, "The Stamp Scrip Experience of Mason City, Iowa," in Mitchell and Shafer, *Standard Catalog of Depression Scrip*, 311-13. Although there was no cost to the holder to keep the scrip until the next stamping date, optimists had estimated that the scrip would be used more often — and so acquire stamps more rapidly.

93. *Ibid.*

those 49 firms, the project was able to close its books showing no net cost to the city. With over \$500,000 worth of business done with the scrip, the unemployed were put to work and the city got its new demonstration concrete road. None of the merchants had to hand over any of the money they had guaranteed, and the whole thing even made a \$300 profit for the city.⁹⁴

STAMP SCRIP had had its day. Born out of the hopelessness and despair of the Great Depression, it had provided useful emergency relief in several small towns and a boost to the political career of Charles Zylstra. But the problems of congestion, indigestion, and lukewarm support soon became apparent elsewhere, so few mourned its demise. When Senator George Wilson proposed his bill to redeem the county scrip, Merle Stone, the editor of the *Hawarden Independent* and Zylstra's nemesis, exulted. His article, "Stamp Money On Its Way Out," included the subheading "Iowa Senate Passes Bill Consigning Zylstra Law to Scrap Heap." When news of the size of the bond issue in Polk County became known, Stone reprinted his February 1933 editorial along with a long quotation from the *Des Moines Register* on Polk County's negative scrip experience. When Zylstra wrote in to defend himself and complained that the *Independent* misrepresented him, Stone was scathing.

Mr. Zylstra complains that The Independent "won't print anything pertaining to the possibilities [of the scrip plan] . . ." Ye gods! Back in 1932 when Mr. Zylstra first began to run for public office and was seeking an inexpensive (to him) form of publicity, this newspaper printed column after column of his contributions relating to his scrip plan. Since then we have given space to various other contributions from him and then because last week chose to present only a part of his lengthy contribution, he gives evidence of feeling aggrieved. It's really too bad.

And now Charley wants us to spell him in the task of "saving the country," but owing to the necessity of being compelled to de-

94. "Statement of Mason City's \$10,000.00 Scrip Fund," 8/13/1934, Milligan Archives.

vote so much of our energy toward the difficult task of earning a living we fell compelled to decline the assignment.⁹⁵

But it was not just Stone's vendetta against Zylstra that led to the conclusion that stamp scrip's day was past. There was general agreement that scrip had run its course. The *New York Times*, in its review of the first year of the New Deal, commented,

A year ago, somebody had the idea that in the absence of regular money local scrip might serve a useful purpose. This was to be self-liquidating through the medium of stamps to be affixed each time it changed hands.

Only six [sic] counties tried out the plan and now wish they hadn't. Local merchants did not care much for it and they cared even less to affix the redemption stamps. Now it is found that there is little money in the treasuries with which to redeem the issues.

As a result it has become necessary to issue bonds for the sums necessary to redeem outstanding scrip.⁹⁶

The experiment had run its course, and had been found largely wanting.

Although scrip had demonstrated its advantages in Hawarden and certain other small towns in Iowa, using it in large cities and at the county level seemed to be a step too far. Merchants and customers in a small town might be prepared to put up with the inconvenience and cost of using scrip for the greater good, to benefit their neighbors, and to accomplish city improvements, but this community spirit was available only in a more diluted form in larger areas. Merchants found that the most effective way of disposing of the scrip was to wait until they had \$25 worth of it and then cash it through the banks. Although this involved the loss of 4 percent of the value, they were still prepared to use scrip as it did appear to generate new business. But as scrip was recirculated in county employees' salaries, displacing cash, it became clearer that, after the initial boost, the merchants could expect no great increase in trade while still having to bear the brunt of the costs.

95. *Hawarden Independent*, 1/4/1934, 5/17/1934, 8/30/1934. In subsequent years, the *Independent* pounced on — and editorialized on — any perceived wrongdoing by “Charley.”

96. *New York Times*, 3/4/1934.

As the “first mover” to attract widespread national attention, Hawarden’s plan, by its mere existence, generated business for the town as visitors came to see what was happening. Those people spent real money at Hawarden shops, restaurants, filling stations, and perhaps at the local hotels, thus boosting the local economy. Many no doubt took away a piece of scrip as a souvenir. But as other cities and counties began to issue scrip, the novelty wore off and souvenir purchases were lower.

The easier it was to dispose of scrip, the more likely it was that the project would be successful. Winneshiek County’s innovation allowing businesses to cash scrip directly at the county treasurer’s office helped in this respect, as it provided an alternative outlet to the banks.⁹⁷ In addition, the one-dollar value of the certificate, about four hours’ pay at the minimum wage mandated by the Zylstra Act, was perhaps too big a denomination to pass easily, especially as retailers were not required to give change.⁹⁸ Rock Rapids, Albia, and Appanoose County were wise to issue 50-cent certificates that required just one-cent stamps, producing an easier medium to use.

The timing of the stamp scrip saga is significant, too. Had the idea of stamp scrip been around a year or two earlier, there would have been less threat to its viability posed by the various funds that started to flow in from the federal government under New Deal programs. If real money were available, why would anyone want to use stamp scrip, except at a hefty discount? But in the absence of real money, scrip could form a reasonable short-term substitute when the plan was carefully designed and well executed.

Unfortunately, the ability of communities to digest scrip turned out to be less than the one dollar per person Zylstra thought would work. Winneshiek County’s issue of \$6,000 was enough to cause indigestion in a county of 22,000 people. Perhaps the maximum issue should have been limited to something closer to 25 cents per person. But then the sums available would have been too small to make a significant difference to the unemployment and poor relief problems.

97. *Decorah Journal*, 4/19/1933.

98. Very roughly, a dollar in 1932 would buy as much as \$16–\$18 today.

Roosevelt's declaration of a bank holiday might have encouraged city councils and county boards to look with more favor on the possibility of scrip. But in small towns, shops and stores were able to extend credit or to accept checks drawn on closed banks for later cashing, and in large cities clearinghouse scrip performed well for the few days or weeks for which it was required.

Stamp scrip died in Iowa with the end of Pella's program in 1937, some three years after the *New York Times* had written scrip's obituary. The Zylstra Act had been experimental, an emergency measure with a two-year life, and there was no thought to extend it. Zylstra himself entered the 1934 gubernatorial race as a Democratic candidate but came in third out of four in the primary in June. He received little press attention, even in Hawarden. He left Iowa in the early 1940s and died in Chicago in 1946.⁹⁹

Occasionally, stamp scrip is mentioned today. A number of local currencies in Germany are based on Gesell's original dated stamp scrip idea, as is England's Stroud Pound. It has been suggested as a possible weapon to combat deflation — when prices are falling, why not make the money fall in value with them? — but to date no one has used scrip in this way. Anyone seeking to do so would be well advised to examine carefully the results of the Iowa experiments. For a plan to have any chance of success, there must, at a minimum, be widespread local support, a clearinghouse arrangement for businesses to dispose of surplus scrip, relatively small denominations (nothing larger than \$5 and \$10 certificates at today's prices), and a requirement that the stamp be added for each transaction, or on a particular date, whichever comes first.

99. See obituaries in the *Hawarden Independent*, 12/5/1946, and the *Sioux Center News*, 12/12/1946.

The Des Moines BirthPlace: Iowa's First Birth Center

RENNE ANN CRAMER

IN 1980 a small group of Des Moines women founded WomanCare, Inc., with the goal of using that non-profit organization to open and support an out-of-hospital birth center in Des Moines. That goal came to fruition with the creation of the Des Moines BirthPlace, a 1,952-square-foot rental in the “armpit of Mercy Hospital,” which founders “converted . . . into a pretty homey place.”¹ During the early years of planning, WomanCare founders focused on understanding the potential client base, building clientele through word of mouth, and learning everything they could about the changing fields of certified nurse-midwifery and natural childbirth. Within four years, they had amassed enough funding to rent and outfit the necessary space, conducted

1. Dana Ericson, interview with author, Des Moines, May 2008.

This article is based on archival work at the Iowa Women's Archives, funded by a grant from the State Historical Society of Iowa. It is also based on ethnographic field work with contemporary birth choice groups, particularly Friends of Iowa Midwives, and my participation in and personal conversations at The Big Push national conference in Birmingham, Alabama (June 2009); my participation there was funded, in part, by Drake University's Center for the Humanities and the Provost's Office at Drake University. As well, I conducted interviews with two players in the history of birth centers in Des Moines: Dana Ericson and Carey Ann Ryan. Funding for transcribing and coding those interviews came from an American Political Science Association Small Grant. I gratefully acknowledge the support of each of these grantors. I am also grateful for the anonymous reviewers' support and critique of this article, as well as for suggestions for revision from Marvin Bergman and Professor Robbie Davis-Floyd. They all contributed to a much better article than originally completed; all remaining omissions and errors are my responsibility.

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market research and a consciousness-raising blitz, and hired certified nurse-midwives (CNMs) to staff the center.

Nurse-midwives provided services at the BirthPlace from 1984 until 1991. During its short tenure, the BirthPlace was the site of nearly 250 out-of-hospital births, pre- and post-natal visits for as many women, and hundreds of well-woman exams.² The BirthPlace was a locus of primary care for a small but significant portion of women in Des Moines and the surrounding area. The story of the BirthPlace – its opening, its operation, and its demise – is one of a unique set of local circumstances; it is also the story of a group of Iowa women responding to, and helping sustain, a national movement toward out-of-hospital birth.

This article examines both contexts for the BirthPlace: the national movement toward birth centers as sites of labor and delivery, and the unique opportunities posed by the BirthPlace's location in a capital city with a strong corporate leadership. The founders of the BirthPlace were willing and able to navigate small-business ownership in a niche regional market; in addition, shifting cultures of birth in Des Moines, contextualized within national changes in attitudes toward birth, enabled early success for the center. These aspects of the BirthPlace's development and operation were important for the initial fundraising and client-based successes of the enterprise; they were also significant contributors to the ultimate demise of the center in 1992.

Twenty years later, there is no free-standing birth center in the state, the licensing legislation has been rescinded, and families in Iowa continue to fight for legalization and regulation of certified professional midwifery in order to have more options for out-of-hospital birth. The conditions that enabled the BirthPlace to succeed initially are still present in the state; a close study of its history enables us to understand the contemporary context for birth options in Iowa as part of a continuum of movement in favor of midwifery nationwide.

Thus, this article contributes not only to the history of women in the region – as a study of the organizational foundations of

2. National Association of Childbearing Centers Official Survey of Experience (1990-91), questionnaire completed by Jean Douglas Smith, folder: "Correspondence, 1982-1992," box 1, Des Moines BirthPlace Records, Iowa Women's Archives (hereafter DMBP/IWA), University of Iowa Libraries, Iowa City.

a consumer-based movement toward options in childbirth – but it also sheds light on more recent movements within the state to expand legal and regulated options for out-of-hospital birth. Although it is a case study examining one birth center in a specific region, the article also contributes to women’s history in the United States in general, as the BirthPlace was situated within a national context of feminism that sought birth options beyond the medical model and was lauded by national leaders within childbirth communities for its innovative and entrepreneurial approach. This article begins by briefly examining the role of feminism in moving toward options in childbirth; it then turns to a more extended discussion of the BirthPlace and the work done there from 1984 to 1992, before examining the role the BirthPlace played in creating precedent for contemporary politics and possibilities for out-of-hospital birth in the state.

THE GROWTH in the number of birth centers occurred at a specific point in U.S. history (the 1970s–1990s), and it was a particular manifestation of U.S. feminism. That growth was also part of the move toward professionalization of nurse-midwifery as a field of study and practice.³

Second-wave feminists emphasized valuing and caring for women’s bodies. The publication of the bestselling *Our Bodies Ourselves* in 1970, along with the movement within feminism to question received medical wisdom, to empower women to “take charge” of their own bodies and value them, contributed to the growth of women’s health as a field of medical specialization. In addition, more women were entering the medical profession, specializing within nursing and becoming physicians. Nursing has long been a female-oriented profession, but 1972 marked the first year that more than 10,000 women applied to medical school for training as physicians, and admissions numbers for women have continued to rise since then.⁴ Feminist his-

3. Raymond G. DeVries, *Making Midwives Legal: Childbirth, Medicine and the Law* (Columbus, OH, 1996); Robbie Davis-Floyd, “ACNM and MANA: Divergent Histories and Convergent Trends,” in Robbie Davis-Floyd and Christine Barbara Johnson, *Mainstreaming Midwives: The Politics of Change* (New York, 2006).

4. Arnold Relman, “The Changing Demography of the Medical Profession,” in Gail Henderson, *The Social Medicine Reader* (Durham, NC, 1994), 263.

torian Rickie Solinger notes that the publication of *Our Bodies Ourselves*, along with Barbara Seaman's text, *The Doctor's Case against the Pill*, "stimulated the feminist/women's health movement, as well as the consumer rights movement," both of which would be of key importance for pro-midwifery organizations and advocates of out-of-hospital birth.⁵

Dana Ericson, one of the founders of WomanCare and the BirthPlace, confirms that the feminist movement's interest in women's health nationwide was part of the political culture in Iowa, as well. "I think really what sparked my interest in women's health was just what was going on in the mid-seventies, which was [the] women's liberation movement. . . . We'd talk about feminist issues. We joined NOW [National Organization for Women]. So that's when I started entertaining going back to school to become an ob-gyn nurse practitioner." Ericson had moved to Des Moines in 1974 and worked as a pediatric nurse while she and her husband, a physician, raised their four children. About the births of those children, she says, "somewhere between the third and the fourth . . . I totally lost interest in going back into hospital nursing. And really my interest had been tweaked for women's health."⁶

Women's health has long been at the forefront of feminist concerns, even prior to feminism's renaissance in the 1970s. First-wave feminists in the United States, while focusing on prohibition and suffrage, also, by the 1910s and the dawning of the Progressive Era, turned to issues of childbirth and maternity care. As Robbie Davis-Floyd, an anthropologist and leading expert on the history and development of midwifery in the United States, writes, "Early feminists eagerly sought technological hospital birth, in the hope that it would constitute a positive step toward true equality of the sexes through removing the cultural stereotypes of women as weak and dependent slaves to nature." One commonly used medical technology was the induction of so-called "twilight sleep" — caused by the drug scopolamine, which left women with no memory of a birth experience during which they were physically and emotionally out of control. The

5. Rickie Solinger, *Pregnancy and Power: A Short History of Reproductive Politics in America* (New York, 2007), 176.

6. Ericson interview.

unanticipated result was that women, rather than receiving respectful and mother-centered care, entered a short-lived but brutal period of hospital birth. Davis-Floyd notes that even though twilight sleep ended in most locations by the 1940s, the medical model of birth continued through this period and, until the 1960s, often included rituals of hospitalized labor and delivery that were demeaning and infantilizing: mandatory pubic shaving, routine enemas, and use of restraints.⁷

Although second-wave feminism's health focus was primarily centered on "women's determination to have access to safe, effective birth control," feminists also increasingly paid close attention to the power differentials between doctors and patients and began to demand "enough information themselves to insist that physicians and other health professionals deal with them as thinking, mature adults."⁸ A significant portion of the growing feminist movement focused on access to compassionate pain relief during childbirth without a return to the days of scopolamine. They championed the use of epidurals, which would keep women conscious during labor and delivery but without pain. Davis-Floyd calls this the "technological model" and argues that it became, and remains, the mainstream approach to birth. Those who espouse the technological model do not directly challenge the medical model but demand that it be sensitive to the needs of women, babies, and families. If it is not, families may seek alternative models of care during labor and delivery, models that comport with what Davis-Floyd calls a "humanistic paradigm" of childbirth that seeks to make technological practices in birth "relational, partnership-oriented, individually responsive, and compassionate." Stopping shy of what Davis-Floyd terms the "holistic paradigm," which emphasizes

7. Robbie Davis-Floyd, *Birth as an American Rite of Passage* (Los Angeles, 2003), 70-71.

8. Solinger, *Pregnancy and Power*, 176. It is critical to note that feminists of color and women living in poverty often sought reproductive health care that was neither about birthing nor birth control; they sought access to health care that would not leave them unwillingly infertile through sterilization that occurred without their consent. This aspect of reproductive justice was routinely ignored by mainstream feminists of the day. See Jennifer Nelson, *Women of Color and the Reproductive Rights Movement* (New York, 2003); and Dorothy Roberts, *Killing the Black Body: Race, Reproduction, and the Meaning of Liberty* (New York, 1998).

the essential unity of practitioner and client, the “humanistic model,” finds its expression in the awareness of a mother’s mind-body connection during birth and often is manifest in midwifery relationships in birthing centers and other locations.⁹

Such a model is present in American culture in large part because of an alternative feminist advocacy of natural birth, which focuses on the power of women in birth, the naturalness of the process, and the usefulness of pain in labor. The publication, in 1975, of Ina May Gaskin’s *Spiritual Midwifery*, a collection of birth stories from women laboring and delivering under the guidance of “lay midwives” at The Farm, an intentional community in Tennessee, was a watershed moment in beginning to normalize natural childbirth.¹⁰ The publication of Gaskin’s book, and the activism of midwives and home-birth families across the nation, made out-of-hospital birth a possibility for women seeking alternatives to the medical model.

Few women were willing or able (due to a lack of legal practitioners) to have an out-of-hospital birth on the model promoted by the midwives at The Farm. Nonetheless, women nationwide became interested in natural, drug- and intervention-free birth through techniques such as Lamaze and the Bradley Method. This was especially true of middle-class, educated, urban, white women who had access to Elisabeth Bing’s groundbreaking 1967 book, *Six Practical Lessons for an Easier Childbirth*. As early as the 1960s and ‘70s, hospitals began to allow, and even embrace, methods of childbirth preparation for labor and delivery that made epidurals less necessary.¹¹

Certified nurse-midwifery, as a professional field, was also coming to prominence at this time, after a long nascency. Mary Breckenridge founded the first nurse-midwifery school in the nation, in Hyden, Kentucky, in 1925. With Breckenridge’s help, a second nurse-midwifery school was founded in New York City in 1928, but the model was not widely accepted for nearly

9. Robbie Davis-Floyd, “The Technocratic, Humanistic, and Holistic Paradigms of Childbirth,” *International Journal of Gynecology and Obstetrics* 75 (2001), Supplement 1:S5–S23.

10. Ina May Gaskin, *Spiritual Midwifery*, 3rd ed. (Summertown, TN, 1990). See also Davis-Floyd, “ACNM and MANA.”

11. Elisabeth Bing, *Six Practical Lessons for an Easier Childbirth* (New York, 1967).

50 more years. Nurse-midwives had to overcome significant medical resistance to their practice, especially from ob-gyn doctors. They also encountered stereotypes regarding the appropriate place and clientele for nurse-midwifery.¹²

A key part of the movement toward professionalization for nurse-midwifery was the establishment, in 1956, of a “maternal and infant health nursing” program in the graduate program at Yale University’s School of Nursing, and the continued development of educational standards for nurse-midwifery.¹³ During the 1960s, nurse-midwives consolidated their role in hospital birth, professionalized, and organized – working within the medical model but offering a standard and quality of care very different from those of dominant modes of birth. By the mid-1970s, nurse-midwives were ready to challenge the hospital’s image as the only (or even best) location for birth. Nurse-midwives opened the first free-standing (not affiliated with a hospital) urban birth center in the United States in New York City in 1975 – nine years before the BirthPlace would open in Des Moines.¹⁴

Birth centers arose as alternatives to both hospital births and births attended at home. Although hospital birth is still the overwhelming choice of most parents, birth centers offer an important alternative for parents who, for many reasons, prefer to deliver in an out-of-hospital environment that is not their home. Some prefer birth center births to home birth because they reside in houses that are not amenable to home birth (such as homes too far from hospital facilities in case of emergency, homes with too many residents to ensure a private birth experience, and homes that are apartments, too close to other apartments for laboring women’s comfort). Some parents who want to labor out-of-hospital, but live in states where home birth at-

12. For histories of midwifery, particularly in the United States, see Davis-Floyd, “ACNM and MANA”; and Judith P. Rooks, *Midwifery and Childbirth in America* (Philadelphia, 1997).

13. Davis-Floyd, “ACNM and MANA,” 35.

14. Maureen May and Robbie-Davis Floyd, “Idealism and Pragmatism in the Creation of the Certified Midwife: The Development of Midwifery in New York and the New York Midwifery Practice Act of 1992,” in Robbie Davis-Floyd and Christine Barbara Johnson, eds., *Mainstreaming Midwives: The Politics of Change* (New York, 2006), 152.

tended by a midwife is illegal, have birth center births as their only option (a small minority of these parents will undertake unattended home birth, a potentially dangerous decision). Other parents prefer birth center births because the staff, rather than the family, does all of the work of cleanup and caretaking after delivery. And parents may prefer birth center births to home birth because there is a sense of safety in having a nurse-midwife and a more fully staffed and stocked facility than a home. In sum, parents take comfort that birth centers are locations for out-of-hospital birth that replicate a "home-like" atmosphere with access to medical technology in facilities that are near hospitals.

Both nurse-midwives and certified professional midwives, sometimes in partnership with each other, staff such centers. Often they do so because they prefer birth center practice to both home-birth and hospital practices. Birth center practices offer a midwife more professional autonomy than hospital practices do. And in birth centers nurse-midwives can more closely replicate a natural birth process.¹⁵ Finally, a birth center practice also requires much less travel than a home-birth midwifery practice does and offers the safety and comfort of a known environment for the birth practitioner.

For all of these reasons, some families and midwives, not wanting to labor and work within the hospital environment but uncomfortable with or unable to labor or work in homes, found the birth center an excellent option. As a result, the United States saw a growth in the number of free-standing alternative birth centers from 1970 to 1990. Just as nurse-midwives were engaged in a process of professionalization and development, so too were birth center managers engaging in a process of gaining licensure and professional status and developing niche marketing for their out-of-hospital birth locales. The primary professional organization for birth centers, the American Association of Birth Centers (AABC), was assisted in its founding by the Maternity Care Association, based in New York City and today known as Childbirth Connection, with grant funding from the John A. Hartford Foundation. That organization continues to be a pow-

15. DeVries, *Making Midwives Legal*, 91.

erful lobbying arm and information clearinghouse for birth center midwives and consumers.

Research on free-standing alternative birth centers shows that their practices and outcomes tend to minimize intervention during labor and delivery and that they have “outstanding” results in terms of reducing rates of cesarean sections and perinatal death. Davis-Floyd cites a 1989 study of 11,814 birth center births showing a perinatal death rate of 1.3 per 1,000 and a 4.4 percent cesarean section rate, which compares favorably to national cesarean section rates of over 28 percent at the time, a rate much higher than the World Health Organization’s recommendation that it not exceed 13–15 percent.¹⁶ It is difficult to compare maternal and child morbidity rates among hospital, home, and birth center births, because midwives screen home and birth center births for risk and accept only low-risk pregnancies, while hospitals must attend women of all risk levels and thus will always have a higher perinatal death rate. When low-risk hospital births are compared to low-risk birth center and home births, however, perinatal mortality rates are about the same – about 1–2 deaths for every 1,000 births. There is, therefore, no additional risk attached to out-of-hospital birth and, proponents of birth centers argue, significantly more comfort for the laboring woman.¹⁷

In the 1970s and 1980s about 2 percent of American women were giving birth without medication. Half of those were attended by nurse-midwives and other birth professionals, such as doctors, in a hospital setting; the other half were attended by birth professionals in out-of-hospital settings (in homes and free-standing birth centers).¹⁸ All in all, whether they embraced

16. In 1965 the United States had a C-section rate of 4.5 percent; there has been a steady – and, to many, alarming – rise in that rate to 34 percent in 2009. See childbirthconnections.org for the latest data, and Sela M. Taffel, Paul J. Placek, Mary Moien, and Carol L. Kosary, “1989 U.S. Cesarean Section Rate Steadies – VBAC Rate Rises to Nearly One in Five,” *Birth* 18 (June 1991) 2:73–77. The 1989 study Davis-Floyd cites in *Birth as an American Rite of Passage* (Berkeley, CA, 2003), is significant because it was the most comprehensive study done on birth centers and the outcomes of birth center births and thus informed the thinking of the founders of the BirthPlace, and its potential clients.

17. Robbie Davis-Floyd, personal communication with author, April 2011.

18. Davis-Floyd, “ACNM and MANA,” 41.

Ina May Gaskin's at-home model, the Lamaze in-hospital but not medicated model, or the out-of-hospital model available in free-standing alternative birth centers, women nationwide, and in Des Moines, were moving toward reclaiming birth as a natural (not medical) process during which women should be respected. As women learned that out-of-hospital birth in low-risk pregnancies was just as safe as in-hospital labor and delivery, even some who were not interested in the politics of their birthing choices became advocates for natural birth in a variety of out-of-hospital settings. Nurse-midwives were key actors in the nationwide movement toward accepting unmedicated birth as well as out-of-hospital models; in Des Moines as well, they were the prime movers toward developing a culture that supported birth centers. Interestingly, the development of this culture focused as much on the business community and the growth of the BirthPlace as a small business as it did on the comfort and desires of laboring women.

ATTITUDES in Des Moines during the 1970s and '80s regarding out-of-hospital birth largely reflected national trends. Des Moines had a very conventional North American birth culture; by 1950, 98 percent of recorded births nationally occurred in a hospital, and the 1970s and '80s saw such "advances" in maternal care via epidurals and inductions that the vast majority of women laboring in the United States expected and wanted to experience during hospital birth. In fact, at the time the BirthPlace's founders were organizing its opening, most women birthing in Des Moines, as in other metropolitan areas nationwide, did not want an out-of-hospital birth. That this is true of Des Moines is evident in the results of a survey undertaken by the BirthPlace's founders, asking what women hoped for in childbirth experiences.¹⁹

Founders sent a "Child Birth Survey" to 300 families whose names were drawn at random from *Des Moines Register* announcements of births in Des Moines in the first six months of 1985. The 101 surveys that were returned formed part of the

19. All of the Des Moines data reported in this section are drawn from "The Des Moines Birth Survey," folder: "Evaluations and Statistics, 1982-1990" (hereafter E&S folder), box 1, DMBP/IWA.

basis upon which the BirthPlace began to market itself. The surveys, which made it possible to compile important demographic data, also help paint a picture of the birth practices and culture in Des Moines a generation ago.

The survey results showed that all or nearly all of the respondents were within the range of normal maternal age (25–42), had at least a high school education, were married (97%), and were privately insured (97%). Three-fourths of the respondents had at least one child in addition to the baby whose birth had landed them in the newspaper. More than 75 percent were lifelong Iowa residents, and 43 percent had traveled from outside of Polk County to give birth in Des Moines. Des Moines residents who responded were evenly split among the city's four distinct districts: north- and west-side residents were represented in the same proportion as south- and east-siders.

The survey showed a high level of engagement in the prenatal process by these parents. Nearly all (98%) of the respondents had received regular prenatal care; most (82%) had received prenatal care within the first two months of pregnancy; and 77 percent had taken childbirth education classes. Nearly all of the prenatal care was done by an ob-gyn or in a doctor's office (96%). *No one* had received care from a certified nurse-midwife.

The survey also asked about the families' use of alternative health practitioners: chiropractors, homeopaths, and herbalists. None of the respondents reported using any alternative health care practitioners. Although use of such alternative practitioners is part of more recent trends in health care delivery, and acceptance of chiropractic and other modalities is still gaining momentum, it is surprising that *no* family responding to the survey would report using *any* form of alternative care in 1985. The picture that this portion of the survey paints of Des Moines clients and patients is that of a conventional group of adults – educated, married, and cautious in their health care choices. Additionally, these clients, or patients, had a high level of satisfaction with the health care they did receive: 93 percent of them were “pretty happy” with the way practitioners took time with them to “answer questions in understandable ways” (96%) and seemed to “understand the families' concerns” (94%); 98 per-

cent of respondents were very satisfied or satisfied with their *prenatal* care.

Almost all of the respondents (98%) had given birth in a hospital, with 97 percent of the 101 reported deliveries occurring under a physician's care. Seventy-eight percent of the births were routine vaginal births, 5 percent were vaginal with forceps, and 17 percent were accomplished by cesarean section (which is in line with the statewide and national rates for cesarean section at the time). A majority of respondents (81%) were given drugs for pain relief. Among those women who were medicated during birth, a now shocking 26 percent of the births took place after the woman had received drugs to be "put out" for the duration of the labor and delivery; only 11 percent of women receiving those drugs reported that they had desired or requested them. Nearly 55 percent of the respondents reported receiving drugs to "help them relax" or "relieve pain," about half (46%) of whom reported desiring those interventions.

The majority of women stayed more than one night in the hospital after delivery and reported a strong desire to extend their stay (69% of respondents stayed for 3 or 4 days after delivery, and 77% reported wanting those stays extended). Almost all families (98%) reported that they were able, during their stays, to interact with their infants at will and felt free to begin parenting as soon as they were able. Hospitals were, by that time, beginning to engage in "family friendly" practices such as "rooming in" and the provision of support to establish breastfeeding; but by no means were these common or universally expected aspects of hospital labor and delivery. The high level of mother-baby interaction reported by these respondents is unusual for the time; it must also be understood within the wording of the question, which stresses that parents could interact "at will" and when they "were able," subjective perspectives that have shifted over time.

The survey portrays a very standard, medicalized picture of labor and delivery. As was probably the case nationwide at that time, most families responding reported that they desired medical intervention in the birth process and that they desired a longer (not shorter) stay in the hospital after labor and delivery. Interestingly, when asked if they were "very satisfied" with the

way their labor and delivery unfolded, the same families who reported overwhelming satisfaction with their prenatal care were less satisfied with their birth experiences: only 73 percent were “very satisfied” with their labor and delivery care; 25 percent were “satisfied”; and 2 percent were “very dissatisfied.” (The nationwide rates of out-of-hospital birth remain steady at 2 percent, an interesting correlation to the rate of dissatisfaction with the hospital delivery process in Des Moines at that time.)

To the founders of WomanCare and the BirthPlace, this survey proved that the medical model had broken down at the point of labor and delivery. Certainly women laboring and delivering in Des Moines hospitals were noticing disconnects between their expectations and their experiences. But not many of the families participating in the survey could imagine an alternative to their experiences. This is clear from their responses to the questions in the fourth section of the survey, which asked families to report on their attitudes about birth. When asked if they agreed that “low-risk pregnancies and deliveries (normal births) need not be managed in a traditional hospital setting,” only 11 respondents strongly agreed; 32 somewhat agreed; and 49 respondents either disagreed or strongly disagreed. When asked whether “a person other than a doctor (ex. a certified nurse-midwife: registered nurses with advanced training in maternity care) are capable of providing adequate prenatal care and performing deliveries for low-risk (normal) births,” 52 respondents agreed strongly or slightly, and only 37 respondents disagreed slightly or strongly. Significantly, when birth practices implicating maternal autonomy were questioned, the results showed even more willingness to consider alternative models of labor and delivery. When asked if they agreed that “traditional procedures such as strapping mothers to tables, use of stirrups, enemas and routine fluids should be optional and based upon the mutual decision of the mother and person providing care,” 73 percent of respondents strongly or slightly agreed.

The survey’s final questions turned from experiences and attitudes toward proclivities. In earlier sections of the survey, these parents had overwhelmingly reported that they were “satisfied” to “very satisfied” with their hospital birth experience and doctor-led prenatal care; some also indicated that they

believed that low-risk births could be managed in other settings. Respondents were also asked about their awareness of out-of-hospital birth centers and their potential use of one. The survey responses show a high level of base knowledge: 68 percent of respondents had heard of birth centers, and 50 percent thought that they were “good ideas.” When asked whether “the out-of-hospital care provided by certified nurse-midwives for women anticipating a normal birth would be as good as care provided by a doctor in a hospital setting,” 54 percent of respondents said yes, and 46 percent answered no. However, when asked if they would use a birth center for future births, only 19 percent said a definite yes, while 64 percent answered a certain no. Clearly, respondents were more open to the *idea* of choice, or options, in childbirth *for other women and families* than they were to seeking those options for themselves.

This attitude of openness to the choices of others dovetails nicely with the strategies employed by many groups seeking to legalize and regulate a broader range of options in childbirth. Many contemporary consumer-led movements for midwifery rely on taglines such as “choice in childbirth” or “safe childbirth options” – stressing that out-of-hospital birth may not be a choice everyone makes but that the choice should be protected and regulated. This attitude of openness to the choices of others also underpins the work of groups that tend to rise up in defense of midwives or to rally around birth centers threatening to close. These “friends of midwives” organizations take a defensive stance in order to safeguard access to choices in childbirth, namely, to give birth out-of-hospital with a trained professional midwife or nurse-midwife.

The consumer group that initially formed in Iowa, Mothers and Others for Midwives (MOMs), did so on this latter model. The group was organized in 1985, first with the goal of supporting the BirthPlace with word-of-mouth referrals and helping to create shifts in the birth culture of the city; later, it was reactivated to try to save the BirthPlace from the financial woes that would eventually cause it to close. MOMs is not currently active in Iowa, but Friends of Iowa Midwives (FOIM) is. FOIM, which originally began as a support and defense organization, has recently (2005) taken on the proactive, offensive strategy of pro-

tecting a wide range of options in birth and championing legislation to license midwives as certified professional midwives.

In any case, the founders of the BirthPlace took the data from their survey and read it as good news. They interpreted the survey results as showing a desire and need for out-of-hospital birth in the region. In hindsight, we might be shocked by their optimism – the vast majority of survey respondents had, after all, indicated that they were *not* interested in having an out-of-hospital birth. Rightly or wrongly, founders used the survey to substantiate their statements of need to licensing boards and potential donors and grantors. They also likely used the findings to write and implement their mission statement, which stressed rights, options, and choices: “It is a basic right of all women to have access to information which enables them to make safe choices regarding their health care and to receive respect for the choices they make.”²⁰

LOCAL PRESS reporting on the BirthPlace during the lead-up to its opening and the first years of its operation was almost completely positive. An early article in 1984 stressed that this was a long-term project, deliberately undertaken to mitigate an already occurring phenomenon – unattended home births undertaken by Iowa families seeking to avoid hospital and medicalized births. Reporter Phyllis Bailey wrote, “Planning for the center began in the summer of 1981 when area obstetrical nurses became concerned with the growing number of home births where no trained health-care professionals assisted.” A 1984 *Des Moines Register* article on midwifery, reprinted from the Associated Press, served to normalize midwifery practice and was paired with a piece by *Register* staff writer Gary Heinlein, whom BirthPlace founders perceived as “very supportive” of their project.²¹

By the year’s end in 1985, the BirthPlace’s summary report of activities closed on a positive note. The climate for out-of-hospital birth in Des Moines seemed to be shifting to a more accepting stance, largely as a result of BirthPlace staff and founders’ public outreach and the favorable stance of the local media.

20. “Mission Statement,” folder: “Goals, 1987-1990,” box 1, DMBP/IWA.

21. *Des Moines Register*, 2/1/1984, clipping in box 1, DMBP/IWA.

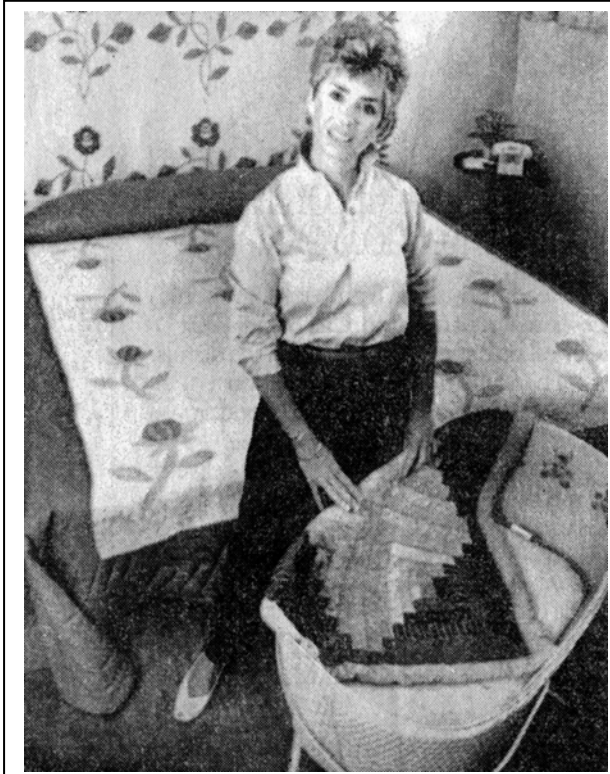
In 1986 the BirthPlace received a fair amount of good local press, beginning with an opinion piece in the *Des Moines Register* that made explicit connections among feminism, choice, family values, and out-of-hospital birth. The BirthPlace's clients, the editorial noted, belong to "a new generation of pregnant women who are childbirth consumers. Not for them the 'twilight sleep' and passive pain of their mothers; they want to be active participants in choosing how and where their children are born. Many of them are older and better-educated than mothers past, and they're not intimidated by a medical degree. They march into obstetricians' offices ready to question and challenge."²²

That editorial was followed in May 1986 by an article titled "The Magic Moment of Giving Birth" and a guest editorial penned by one of the BirthPlace's founders, Dana Ericson. Ericson's piece focused on the work of anthropologist Robbie Davis-Floyd and on what Ericson called the "nature of childbirth," which, she argued, midwives "respect." Ericson, quoting Davis-Floyd, wrote, "The midwife's rituals reflect a belief system that honors woman and her capacity to create life and her ability to bring it forth." Ericson added this from her personal experience: "I've observed many women knowing the eruption of power that comes with bringing life."²³

Notably, a long piece published in the *Des Moines Register* in October stressed, "At the BirthPlace, the emphasis is on the normal. Customers are called clients, not patients; they address [the midwife] by her first name and are given her home telephone number." The article was balanced, using pullout quotes from both "sides" of the issue. Dr. Albert Mintzer, who was (and remained) against out-of-hospital birth practices, was quoted as saying, "I believe it's a step backward." His quote was paired with a statement from parents who had used the BirthPlace: "Midwifery practice means that you view birth as a normal

22. *Des Moines Register*, 4/2/1986, clipping in box 1, DMBP/IWA. The level of support in the local press for the BirthPlace is unusual. It is unclear why so much of the *Des Moines Register's* coverage, by such a wide variety of reporting and editorial staff, would be so favorable. When I spoke with Kathleen Richardson, the reporter who wrote the 1986 editorial and who is now a professor of journalism at Drake University, she was uncertain why the coverage had been so sustained and so positive.

23. *Des Moines Register*, 5/6/1986, clippings in box 1, DMBP/IWA.



BirthPlace founder Dana Ericson posed with quilts in one of the center's birthing rooms for a positive story in the Omaha World-Herald, 9/2/1986.

family event." In subsequent issues of the *Register*, three letters in support of the BirthPlace were published in the editorial section; the *Register* published no letters expressing opposition to out-of-hospital birth.²⁴

At the outset, the Des Moines BirthPlace managed to avoid the active and outright hostility that some birth centers, and many more midwives, encountered. Even the opposition to it, found particularly among hospital staff and personnel, took the form of neglect and obstructive ignorance, rather than antagonistic rhetoric or action. This obstructive ignorance and neglect

24. *Des Moines Register*, 10/19/1986 and undated clippings, in box 1, DMBP/IWA.

would eventually have dire consequences for the BirthPlace, when midwives were unable to find physician backup; at the outset of the center's operations, however, neglect was better than vocal hostility, as the lack of a strong and vocal opposition enabled the founders to gather corporate support and foundation grants, as well as clientele, to fund the center's work.

TO AN EXTENT rare among birth centers nationwide, the Des Moines BirthPlace was the beneficiary not only of positive local media coverage but also of financial backing and moral support from local corporate sponsors. Soon after its incorporation, the BirthPlace's board sought to cultivate donations from locally based national businesses such as John Deere and Principal Financial Group, as well as statewide grant makers.

BirthPlace founders took a grant-writing course at Drake University and had initial grant-seeking success that helped build their confidence and their coffers. A \$47,500 grant from the Northwest Area Foundation came at a key point in 1983, allowing planning to proceed. "It's nice," Ericson reported, "when somebody hands you a check for \$5,000. And then \$20,000. And then . . . all I had to do really, once that started happening, was invite people to be on our board. So we had the CEO of Pioneer Hi-Bred on our board. . . . We had Elaine Szymoniak [on our board] who was a [state] senator at the time."²⁵

Even before the doors of the BirthPlace opened, its founders were planning open houses for potential donors, potential clients, and members of the corporate community. They had established a speaker's bureau as early as 1983, and by the time the BirthPlace's doors opened in 1984, they were fielding requests from a wide range of venues. In its first year of operation (1984), BirthPlace staff made 45 individual presentations in a variety of settings, from lectures in local nursing schools and statewide La Leche League conferences to television and radio interviews. That number grew to 55 presentations in 1985, including participation in the local March of Dimes telethon and presentations to a number of religious groups and denominations.²⁶

25. Ericson interview.

26. See E&S folder, box 1, DMBP/IWA.

A draft of a "1984 Summary of Project Activities" stated, "Business leaders in the community are very interested in and supportive of our project. They have assumed positions on our Board of Directors and promoted our services in other ways. We are preparing a presentation for the Des Moines Business Coalition, a group with a primary objective of lowering employee health care costs."²⁷ By 1985, the center had a strong roster of corporate and foundation funding, with money from nearly every sector of the Des Moines economy, including Northwestern Bell, Brenton National Bank, Pioneer Hi-Bred International, Meredith Corporation, the Des Moines Chamber of Commerce, Iowa Power and Light, and Bankers Life. Additional significant funding came from the Mid-Iowa Health Foundation, which granted \$20,000 in 1985, a grant that was significant not only for the amount of money it provided the BirthPlace but also because it came in the first year of funding by the foundation, which had been started in 1984 to promote community health in mid-Iowa, primarily Polk County, through grant-making activities promoting primary care, children's health, and prevention practices.²⁸

Part of the BirthPlace's success in cultivating corporate donors was the sense that the founders and the corporate partners shared a social circle. In an undated fundraising letter to Tom Gould, president and CEO of Younkers Corporate Offices, located in Des Moines, the stated need for carpet in the birth center shared space with a reference to a shared social event, a trick of using olive oil to keep cooked spaghetti from clumping, and the importance of "first impressions" for the birth center's success. As Ericson later put it, "we were very, very network-y."²⁹

Jean Douglas Smith, chair of the BirthPlace's board of directors, later shared some of this networking savvy with the board of directors of the National Association of Childbearing Centers (NACC; formerly the AABC).

27. "1984 Summary of Project Activities," E&S folder, box 1, DMBP/ IWA.

28. "1983 Activities," "1984 Activities," "1985 Activities," all in E&S folder, box 1, DMBP/ IWA.

29. Dana Ericson to Tom Gould, undated, folder: "Correspondence, 1982-1992," box 1, DMBP/IWA; Ericson interview.

If you want to have some “big names” from the corporate world on your group, you might want to approach Dave Hurd, CEO for the Principal Financial Group. . . . Or you might want to ask Roger Brooks, CEO of Central Life Assurance Companies. Roger is incredibly acute, particularly about health care issues. He has served on the BirthPlace’s Board of Directors and knows something about nurse-midwifery and about out-of-hospital birth. He also knows the intransigence of the current system and the corporate world’s role in that. He is a visionary thinker.³⁰

WomanCare’s founders eagerly cultivated their relationships with business in other ways. Ericson recalled, as the “perfect example,” that Central Life Assurance CEO Robert Brooks

invited us in to do “lunch and learns” with his employee groups. . . . We had . . . film days once a month that we could do over the lunch hour at his company. . . . And the real incentive was that they gave their employees a benefit that if you chose the BirthPlace to pursue the prenatal care and the birth of the baby, you know, it essentially cost them nothing. There was no out-of-pocket anything. There was no deductible. There was no nothing. And then they started listing the families who’d had their baby in the [corporate] newsletter. I mean that’s just one example.³¹

Early on, in fact, potentially even more important than corporate financial support was corporate leaders’ willingness to include the BirthPlace in medical plans for employees, thus expanding the center’s potential client base.³² At the time, the Des Moines-based workforce of Principal Financial Group was 75 percent female; presumably many of those women would give birth while employees of the company. Rather than highlighting the center’s homelike environment or good outcomes, BirthPlace rhetoric to the corporate community focused, quite early for national political debate, on arguments stressing the low cost and efficiency of BirthPlace births.

30. Jean Douglas Smith to NACC President Kitty Ernst, n.d. (1992), folder: “Correspondence, 1982-1992,” box 1, DMBP/IWA.

31. *Ibid.*

32. Employers who self-insured were able to offer coverage for BirthCenter births; those who purchased group plans from insurance agencies were often able to press for coverage or provide an employer-paid incentive to use the BirthCenter.

The center's setting and outcomes were certainly important – and figured prominently in advertisements and press releases geared toward attracting clients – but in its appeals to the corporate community of greater Des Moines, BirthPlace representatives usually stressed that they provided efficient delivery of services. Smith believed that birth centers and midwives would be more successful “by allying themselves with the corporate world which is so frantic to contain health care costs at no diminution in quality.” In a draft of an “Open Letter to Des Moines Corporate Executives,” written by Smith and Ericson but never submitted to the press or sent to business leaders, the BirthPlace founders stressed the poor quality and cost-ineffectiveness of health care nationwide, decried physicians’ monopoly over birth, and argued for consumer-led health reform. As Ericson reflected in 2007, “We went to Meredith. We went to Bankers Life. We went to the Des Moines Register. . . . You know, we went to big businesses. . . . And we sold them on the concept of cost containment. We had to educate them about midwifery. They didn’t know anything about it. But boy did they zero in on cost containment.”³³

As these comments indicate, even as they sought external support from the business community, the BirthPlace’s founders and the midwives they hired stressed their own entrepreneurial spirit. Although it is now standard practice for nonprofit and governmental organizations to follow corporate goal-setting and assessment processes, it was early and unusual for midwives incorporating in the 1980s to do so, especially since many midwives were styling themselves as “counter-cultural” rather than managerial. Yet early BirthPlace documents outline goals, objectives, and evaluation procedures, and show a willingness and even desire to focus on the business side of the center’s life, not only its birthing aspects. Goals for 1982, for instance, included

1. formation of Advisory Board Ad Hoc Committees
2. Filing 501(c)(3) tax exempt application
3. Location of potential funding: Foundations
4. Contract with physicians for medical back-up of center

33. Jean Douglas Smith and Dana Ericson, “Open Letter to Des Moines Corporate Executives” (draft), undated (1992), folder: “Correspondence, 1982-1992,” box 1, DMBP/IWA; Ericson interview.

5. File Certificate of Need Application with State Health Dept.
6. Explore State Medicaid reimbursement of nurse-midwives with Department of Social Services
7. Continue to support the passage of the Advanced Registered Nurse Practitioner segment of the Iowa Code of Nursing; (ARNP) Rules and Regulations for licensure of nurse-midwives.³⁴

A list of activities for the month of April 1982 showed a similarly wide range of activities for BirthPlace founders: they celebrated National Nurse-midwife Week (April 19–26) by attending a signing ceremony at which Governor Ray proclaimed it Iowa Nurse-midwife Week; did two television and three radio interviews; showed the film *Daughters of Time* and handed out handouts; attended the American College of Nurse Midwives national conference; and achieved federal tax-exempt status and applied for state.³⁵ BirthPlace founders were successfully operating on several fronts. They were simultaneously establishing local ties for financial and political support, building a client base, and keeping in touch with the national birthing community.

In 1987 Kitty Ernst, the president of the National Association of Childbearing Centers, the primary professional organization for birth center management, visited Des Moines. Ernst held a consultation with the BirthPlace's board members. During that conversation, as Jean Douglas Smith put it, she "had wrung from all present a commitment to keeping the BirthPlace open and in business." Ernst noted in her comments to the board that "she didn't know of a single birth center in the US which had the consistent support of the corporate community that the Des Moines BirthPlace has."³⁶ That singularity was a hallmark of the BirthPlace and its success.

However, Ernst also said that they had not exploited this "considerable resource" for all that it was worth, and that they should continue to develop ties with the business community. Unfortunately, the inability to maintain that level of support, combined with staffing problems, contributed to the center's eventual demise.

34. "1982 Activities," E&S folder, box 1, DMBP/IWA.

35. Ibid.

36. Jean Douglas Smith, "Minutes of Consultation with Kitty Ernst," 11/27/1987, folder: "Board of Directors, 1987," box 1, DMBP/IWA.

ONE UNUSUAL ASPECT of the legal history of the BirthPlace is how eager its founders were to embrace legislation, licensure, and regulation. When the initial business plan was envisioned, midwifery was legal, but there were no laws or regulations governing the operation of birth centers in Iowa: birth centers were a “totally foreign thing” to legislators and regulators. On the one hand, founders of the BirthPlace felt freed up by this lack of regulation. As Ericson later recalled, “First of all, there were no requirements. There were no regs in existence for birthing centers. And there’s nothing in the law that governs nurse midwives. . . . We are independent, licensed independent nurse practitioners. So really there isn’t anything that could just stop us all. And we were all quite empowered by that because, you know, we had sold the concept to the business community.” On the other hand, the BirthPlace’s founders recognized almost immediately the liability and risk that accompanied operating in such a lawless environment. BirthPlace founders also felt the need to get a licensure bill passed out of a desire to serve low-income Medicaid clients, as the federal government would not reimburse unlicensed centers.³⁷

Ericson recalled the process of getting the licensure bill passed as “an interesting experience.” She reflected, “I had never done any lobbying before on a bill, but we had legislators coming in for coffee and doughnut things at our birth center, touring or whatever, for months. . . . We were doing all that. And by George, we got it done.” And they got it done on their first attempt – no small feat. The unified support of corporate donors and constituents that they had cultivated was an important factor in their success. Ericson reported that they faced opposition from the Iowa Hospital Association and the Iowa Medical Society. “But you know what? Business was behind us. . . . [We had] the CEO of Pioneer Hi-Bred calling [legislators] saying, ‘You know, this is good for our bottom line. It’s good for Des Moines.’” In her estimation, corporate support helped the legislative effort tremendously.³⁸

37. Ericson interview.

38. *Ibid.*

In large part, the BirthPlace's board was successful in securing appropriate legislation because it was seeking a moderate goal: to be brought into the purview of the state for regulatory purposes (not, for instance, to be exempt from regulation). Legislators granted this moderate step, a request to be regulated, with no debate.³⁹ Midwifery in the state of Iowa would not be so lucky again.

ALMOST FROM THE BEGINNING of its operations, though, the BirthPlace and its staff faced significant difficulties. Its problems included strained relationships with doctors and hospital staff, financial woes, turnover among the nurse-midwives, and further difficulty convincing nurse-midwives to move to Des Moines to practice. Some of these problems probably should have been predicted, but they were largely unanticipated by the BirthPlace founders. The founders wrote an internal memo in 1985, stating that they had, perhaps, been a bit naive, in their underestimation of the obstacles in their way:

There are only three nurse-midwives practicing clinically in Iowa. Introducing both nurse-midwifery and out-of-hospital births to a conservative community such as Des Moines has been a slow process. We have discovered that satisfied customers provide our best advertising. A major "obstacle" to our growth has been opposition from the medical community. . . . Physicians have expressed a concern about potential client losses to our service.⁴⁰

The BirthPlace was fortunate to have had a loyal and expanding client base. Many within that client base reported poor relationships with doctors. As part of the standard model for birth center operations, staff at the BirthPlace had to have a good relationship with medical staff in the city; they relied on having hospital privileges and finding doctors willing to work with them. They also needed good relationships in order to ensure

39. The licensure and regulation went into effect in 1988. Although beyond the scope of the present article, it would be fruitful to inquire into the motivations and reasoning for the support of the BirthPlace by legislators and members of the business community. Future research may seek to interview policymakers and business leaders for their perspectives.

40. "1984 Summary of Activities," E&S folder, box 1, DMBP/IWA.

good situations when clients needed to transfer into hospital care during or immediately after labor and delivery.

Interestingly, local doctors and nurses did not seem to be overwhelmingly hostile and did not overtly show their disapproval of out-of-hospital birth. The horror stories of bad transfer situations reported in the literature from other parts of the nation were largely absent in Des Moines.⁴¹ Rather, as one of the founders explained it, members of the local medical community would simply refuse to serve as backup for the BirthPlace. As Ericson put it, "We had one physician who was consistently there for us and he's just now [in 2007] retiring."⁴² Part of the problem, even for those physicians who were sympathetic to out-of-hospital births, was the threat of malpractice and vicarious liability suits as well as increased costs of malpractice insurance for doctors who were willing to provide backup. The archives contain internal memos documenting instances when doctors withdrew their backup support and even declined to serve on the BirthPlace's board of directors, citing legal advice from counsel and requests from insurers as their main reasons for doing so.⁴³

Even more, hospitals themselves (not just individual physicians) would refuse to interact with BirthPlace midwives and remained steadfast in refusing to grant them the hospital privileges they needed for prescriptions, lab work, and workable transfer relationships. An internal memo in 1985 noted,

Frustrating obstacles were encountered in attempts by the CNMs to obtain clinical privileges at Des Moines hospitals. . . . Applications [for privileges] were submitted in October 1984. The By-Laws

41. Renee Ann Cramer, "Limits of Law in Securing Reproductive Freedoms: Midwife Assisted Homebirth in California," unpublished manuscript presented at the 2009 annual meeting of the Law & Society Association, on file with author. See also Robbie Davis-Floyd, "Home-birth Emergencies in the US and Mexico: The Trouble with Transport," *Social Science & Medicine* 56 (2003), 1911-31; and gentlebirth.org, a web site established and maintained by midwives in California, in part to document difficult transport situations and legal quagmires.

42. Ericson interview.

43. Memo, Jean Douglas Smith to Board and Staff at WomanCare, Inc., 4/7/1988, folder: "Board of Directors, 1988," box 1, DMBP/IWA; [Dr.] Mary M. McMahon to Jean Douglas Smith, 11/30/87, *ibid*.

at [Iowa] L[utheran] H[ospital] are written (and interpreted) to restrict clinical privileges to only those allied health professionals who are employees of either the hospital or a physician enjoying privileges at the hospital. . . . Mercy's denial of clinical privileges was much more vague than ILH. . . . A request for clarification has not been satisfactorily answered.

The memo concludes, "It has become apparent that action on our requests for applications, privileges and By-law revisions can be effectively held up for indefinite periods of time." Adding to the obstacles, near the end of 1985 the first two nurse-midwives employed by the center resigned before their applications for hospital privileges at Iowa Lutheran were processed. Their reasons for resigning were related to but not limited to the lack of hospital privileges.⁴⁴

One of the unanticipated difficulties the founders of the BirthPlace faced was their limited ability to attract, hire, and retain well-trained nurse-midwives who fit the model of their practice. Nurse-midwives at the BirthPlace had to be entrepreneurial in securing clients and approaching the community. They also had to be diplomatic and appropriately close to the medical establishment; they had to navigate the strong personalities of the board of directors; and, of course, they had to be skilled midwives able to handle a growing volume of practice. Women with the appropriate education, training, and aptitudes would require an appropriate salary. And that proved difficult for a small organization relying primarily on grants and donations. Dana Ericson reports, "We couldn't recruit midwives. The midwives that we had stayed for a year or two and then they would go and then we recruited and recruited."⁴⁵ The shortage of midwives was a primary concern in internal communications.

Financial concerns were intimately tied to the inability to hire and retain midwives in three important ways. First, because the center was under financial stress, those administering it were not able to offer premium wages to incoming midwives. The BirthPlace paid total salaries of just under \$44,000 in 1985 — an

44. "1985 Summary of Project Activities" and "1986 Summary of Project Activities," both in E&S folder, box 1, DMBP/IWA.

45. Ericson interview.

amount divided among two full-time midwives as well as part-time secretarial staff.⁴⁶ By 1991, the BirthPlace was advertising individual certified nurse-midwife positions that paid \$40,000 each – a significant increase in salary but still a difficult draw for qualified applicants who could make more working in a hospital. Nurses in a hospital setting made, on average, \$29,588 nationwide in 1990, but ob-gyn nurses specializing in labor could expect much higher salaries; some estimates for the era put such salaries at between \$40,000 and \$90,000 per year.⁴⁷

Second, the midwives being hired by the BirthPlace for wages less than what they could earn elsewhere were being asked to do herculean tasks. Many midwives who chose to practice in birth centers, or as parts of group practice, did so in part because they had family or life obligations that made being the only on-call midwife undesirable or impossible; nurse-midwives at the BirthPlace, meanwhile, were attending a high volume of births with minimal support or time off. In addition, because it was difficult to find physician backup and secure hospital privileges, the job of any midwife hired to work at the BirthPlace was, in part, to facilitate stronger and smoother relationships with an increasingly reluctant Des Moines medical community. For midwives extremely dedicated to the out-of-hospital model, this proved difficult to do. As Jean Douglas Smith wrote in a note to the nurse-midwives employed by the center, “I do have some suggestions for ‘wooing’ physicians. I agree that this has to be handled subtly, sensitively, diplomatically and very carefully.”⁴⁸

A combination of these factors – in particular, low pay and a stressful work environment – contributed to the quick burn-out experienced by midwives working at the center. As a result, the BirthPlace had to resort to hiring midwives on a rotating basis. This is the third important way that financial concerns were tied to the center’s inability to hire and retain nurse-midwives. As the BirthPlace lost its full-time residential mid-

46. “1985 Summary of Project Activities,” E&S folder, box 1, DMBP/IWA. The average nursing salary in 1980 was just over \$13,000 per year.

47. See various documents in folder: “Recruitment, 1991,” box 1, DMBP/IWA.

48. Jean Douglas Smith, undated note, folder: “Hospital Privileges, 1984–1990,” box 2, IWA/DMBP.

wifery staff and was consistently unable to attract the candidates it sought to recruit, the directors relied on a cadre of out-of-town midwives willing to temporarily relocate for a brief stint in Des Moines. The midwives who applied for such positions came from a wide variety of backgrounds. Some were working in larger city settings and sought a more relaxing pace for a brief time; others came from rural environments and sought access to a higher volume of births. While potentially a boon to the local birthing community's ability to attract high-quality practitioners who otherwise would not relocate to Des Moines for a longer period of time, this model ultimately contributed to the center's demise.

This is so for two reasons. First, a steadily rotating staff found it especially difficult to establish working relationships with the medical professionals in the city. More problematic, each traveling midwife would find it difficult to be in Des Moines long enough to establish a relationship with the parents birthing in the center. None of the midwives' rotations lasted an entire 40-week gestational period, so none was able to be with a client from the beginning of the pregnancy to the birth, let alone through the post-partum, or follow-up, well-woman care. Most families who choose to birth with midwives in an out-of-hospital setting do so in large part because they want a closer relationship with the birth professional attending them; the rotating midwife model made such relationships impossible.

In addition, by the early 1990s, the BirthPlace was beginning to develop a client base that relied heavily on loyal returning families as well as word-of-mouth recommendations from families pleased with their birth experience at the center. Absent a long-term midwife, those referrals were sure to drop off. One could recommend the center, certainly, but it would be impossible to recommend a particular midwife. Regarding this aspect of the rotation model, internal memos note, "The effect on the growth of business is devastating."⁴⁹

Finally, in its need to staff the center, the BirthPlace was at the mercy of the financial demands of the midwives rotating in to serve the community. Some were willing to do so for mere

49. Memo, 1986, folder: "Goals, 1987-1990," box 1, DMBP/IWA.

relocation costs, others for a low per diem. Some, though, sought their normal fees, often much higher than a full-time residential midwife would have earned at the center.

The model of rotating out-of-town midwives to serve the BirthPlace was born in part from financial necessity – the inability to hire permanent staff at competitive rates. The model in practice ultimately contributed to the center’s closing by being an expensive solution to a long-term problem, one that exacerbated the difficulty of developing lasting relationships with doctors, nurses, and birthing families.

THE BIRTHPLACE’S INITIAL SUCCESS in attracting corporate sponsorship also actually may have contributed to its eventual demise. In 1985 client receipts were up substantially from its first year; the BirthPlace earned \$44,576 from client services in that year. However, the majority of its income – \$45,113 – still came in the form of contributions and donations.⁵⁰ Even with growing client numbers, the BirthPlace was not operating sustainably absent corporate and foundation support. That was tenable for the first few years of operation, but eventually donors hoping to see sustainability in financial practices began to taper off their contributions.

By 1988, the financial reports showed a stronger ratio of client receipts to other sources, which coincided with an alarming decline in corporate and foundation support. In that year, client receipts made up \$142,200 out of a total revenue base of \$143,195. Even though the BirthPlace’s directors continued to seek grants and contributions, they were having less success in that regard. Yet their income covered their expenses (\$112,488) that year.⁵¹ The “Year End Business Report,” prepared by Jean Douglas Smith in 1988 and delivered to the board, ended on an upbeat note:

I am extremely pleased to say that we ended 1988 with a dedicated staff with high morale. That’s quite an accomplishment after who knows how many years of staff-Board friction, staff discontent

50. “Financial Summary 1985,” E&S folder, box 1, DMBP/IWA.

51. “Financial Summary 1988,” E&S folder, box 1, DMBP/IWA.

over low pay, departing staff, etc. Our two CNMs . . . work well together, enjoy one another, and, most importantly for our clients, really have quite different and complementary styles. In May, our CNMs' salaries were increased to a level that is at least satisfactory.⁵²

Although things seemed to be looking up financially, the BirthPlace suffered a blow when it lost its two attending midwives and had to move to the rotation method of staffing. The increased expenses of staffing the BirthPlace, the lost clientele caused by the rotation method, and the growing costs of all things associated with running the business brought severe financial and emotional stress to the board and its financial managers. From 1989 until the BirthPlace shut its doors in 1992, communications from board president Jean Douglas Smith to the board were tense. In early 1989, after "some bills" had not been paid for "two to three months," Dana Ericson approached West Bank for a \$5,000 loan for the BirthPlace and also began facilitating meetings including Smith, the midwife Becky, and community leaders to reinstate some of the corporate and donor funding that "had been keeping the center afloat."⁵³

At the end of the monthly report for March 1989, Smith noted, "P.S. I failed to mention (how I could have done this, I don't know, because it preys on my mind constantly) that we did not have enough money to pay our employee withholding taxes in a timely fashion." A month later, Smith wrote, "Financial Situation: Things are pretty grim right now. For the first time in my memory, we were unable to meet our payroll last Thursday." She concluded, "I am loathe to sign a contract [with the Teleconnect telephone book] until I have some better indication of whether this place is going to be alive 6 months from now." Summer brought little reprieve. In June 1989 Smith attempted humor when she informed the board, "I wish I had the constitution of Indiana Jones. He, it seems, likes to live on the edge of disaster! I am not so built."⁵⁴

52. "1985 Year End Business Report," E&S folder, box 1, DMBP/IWA.

53. "Business Report: February to Mid-March 1989," folder: "Board of Directors, 1989," box 2, DMBP/IWA.

54. *Ibid.*; "Monthly Business Report—May, 1989"; "Business Report," 4/16/1989; Smith to Board, 6/5/1989; all in folder: "Board of Directors, 1989," box 2, DMBP/IWA.

The board of directors met in emergency session in September 1989, with the sole agenda item of "consideration of the dissolution of WomanCare, Inc. and closing the BirthPlace." In her memo calling the meeting, Smith wrote, "The weight of the financial situation is such that our options appear to be limited to either the closing of our doors or finding a hospital who would like to take over our operations."⁵⁵ The board met and decided to keep the center in operation, but its fortunes did not improve. An October 12 letter from Smith to the board showed her to be particularly discouraged. "As you know, at the Board meeting, I was very hopeful that we would generate a contribution from the Des Moines Clearing House (bank presidents), but that did not materialize. We received a letter last week saying that the group had voted not to support us. It was a blow to me, both in terms of my own reading of the situation and in terms of our financial condition."⁵⁶

By sheer force of will and the rallies of a concerned and aware parents' group — Mothers and Others for Midwives (MOMs) — the BirthPlace continued to operate for two more years. But its financial problems continued, and the center operated on a nearly month-to-month budget, often with a deficit. In July 1991 Smith wrote, "Cash flow analysis indicates that, at our current level of business . . . we are going to be in big-time deficit (around \$28,000). However, by the end of December, we should be relatively okay (only \$4,500 in the red). The Board seems to think this is handle-able."⁵⁷

The BirthPlace might have been able, eventually, to find a way around the financial problems it faced; those difficulties, however, were compounded by lack of doctor support and the need to rely on a rotation of midwives. These three factors (poor finances, lack of midwives, and missing physician support) eventually conspired to close the center down. One of its founders tells the story this way:

55. Smith to Board, 8/31/1989, *ibid.*

56. Smith to Board, 10/12/1989, *ibid.*

57. Smith to Patricia A. Cottrille, D.O., 7/31/1991, folder: "Recruitment, 1991," box 1, DMBP/IWA.

And really what took us down was we were . . . existing in that last year on [rotating] midwives. . . . But we were able to recruit finally a midwife from Phoenix who claimed she'd never worked at the hospital but she'd wanted to take a shift. And we couldn't find anybody else, so we were like, "Well, here's a midwife who wants the job, so I guess we're fine with it." She, by the time we got her here and really spent time with her, we found out she was so fearful. . . . It was so disappointing. . . . She was afraid of her shadow. She was afraid of being in the birth center. She was transferring people out right and left. She was constantly calling [the doctor] for this and that. . . . I remember the morning we were up there scrambling, working, and the phone rang and it was [the doctor]. And he said, "Dana, I'm pulling the plug. I can't do this anymore. Your midwife is making me nuts." And I had the phone in my hand and I put my hand over the bottom and I said to Jeannie [Smith, the executive director], "It's [the doctor]. He's backing out." And I looked at her and she looked at me and I said, "I understand, we'll be in touch." He goes, "Yeah, I'm sorry. I'm sorry honey, but you know what, I just can't take her." [laughter] . . . So I hung up the phone and Jean and I looked at each other and that little front office, and we just said, "That's it. That's it. . . . We're closing this sucker down." So in thirty days, we closed it. . . . We found everybody a provider. We got everybody transferred. We got everybody whatever and we shut down. Oh and then there was an outrage from the community that it had been closed.⁵⁸

After years of financial stress and an unsustainable staffing model, a doctor's unwillingness to continue the relationship was the final straw. After years of planning and strategizing, the Des Moines BirthPlace was closed abruptly.

THE DES MOINES BIRTHPLACE was open for only five years and has been out of operation for nearly 20, yet its legacy and residual effects are significant. Its founders remain active in the birth culture of Des Moines and the region. The past two decades in particular have seen an increased presence of out-of-hospital midwives in Des Moines. Whereas only one certified nurse-midwife operated in the state of Iowa as a whole in 1982 (in a Burlington hospital), in 2012 the city of Des Moines alone

58. Ericson interview.

has four certified nurse-midwives in home-birth practice, and a roster of nurse-midwives attend births in the city's hospitals. In addition, there is a growing and lively consumer-based movement in support of midwifery, as well as a continued movement toward licensing and regulating out-of-hospital birth providers.

Within a decade of the BirthPlace's closing, Carey Ann Ryan, a nurse-midwife who had moved to Des Moines to be part of the birth center movement, opened Almost Home, a birth center in Des Moines's Ingersoll neighborhood. Ryan came to Des Moines knowing the cultural understanding of birth in the city and the financial challenges the BirthPlace had faced. When asked why she chose Des Moines, given those obstacles, she answered, "Birth centers are still illegal in Illinois. I went to school specifically to work in a birth center."⁵⁹ Although Iowa's state legislature repealed birth center licensure in 2002, birth centers remain legal, governed by national accrediting standards from the Commission on Accreditation of Birth Centers. For Ryan, the presence of a previous birth center, as well as legislative openness to industry regulation, made Des Moines an attractive place to relocate. Methodist Hospital objected to the license for Almost Home. The birth center was not needed, it said, because it already provided similar services. Nonetheless, the center was permitted to open in 2003. Almost Home operated as a birth center from 2003 until 2007; the building now sits empty and for sale.

Mothers and Others for Midwives (MOMs), which began in support of the BirthPlace and later offered financial and moral reinforcement for Almost Home, continues to be present in Des Moines midwifery politics, though more quietly. Other organizations have grown to take on its roles of educating consumers, providing support, and rallying in defense of midwives. The Des Moines chapter of the International Cesarean Section Awareness Network (ICAN), devoted to decreasing unnecessary cesarean-section births, is particularly active in the city.

ICAN members are often allied closely with three Des Moines-based parenting groups that stress natural birth: Holistic Families Network, the local chapter of La Leche League

59. Carey Ann Ryan, interview with author, Des Moines, January 2008.

(LLL), International, and the Iowa chapter of Attachment Parenting International (AP-I Iowa). These organizations have overlapping membership with a fourth, more recent manifestation of support for out-of-hospital birth in the state: Friends of Iowa Midwives (FOIM). FOIM, with chapters throughout Iowa, works to promote awareness of birth alternatives while supporting midwives and home-birth families. FOIM is the primary organization in a push reinvigorated in 2008 and steadily gaining momentum to promote legislation to legalize and regulate the practice of Certified Professional Midwifery in Iowa. Certified Professional Midwives (CPMs) are midwives without nurse-midwifery training who pass a rigorous exam after several years of apprenticeship and training. Currently, CPMs are legal and licensed in 26 states, but it is still not possible to get licensed as a CPM in Iowa — one of eight states with active campaigns to achieve legal status and regulation for CPMs.⁶⁰

The movement to pass legislation regulating and licensing CPMs has its genesis in the successful movement, undertaken by the founders of the BirthPlace, to open, legalize, and regulate birth centers in Iowa. The BirthPlace was initially successful because of its founders' ability to network with local business leaders and make a compelling case for corporate sponsorship of the endeavor. To an extent unprecedented in other birth centers of the period, the BirthPlace relied on corporate goodwill and financial support, which enabled the center to be initially successful but ultimately contributed to its demise.

The BirthPlace founders described themselves and their midwife employees as "entrepreneurial" and "professional." Modern midwifery for out-of-hospital birth stresses the same approach. Nationwide, midwives are eschewing the granola, hippie, counter-cultural persona for one that telegraphs "modern," "capable," and "professional."⁶¹ Iowa midwives are a diverse group, even among those who support FOIM and the message of licensing, but the message of professionalism and modernity carry weight at the Capitol.

60. For links to current state efforts and midwives' current legal status, see the North American Registry of Midwives website at www.narm.org.

61. Personal communications and field notes, Big Push meeting, a national strategy session of midwifery consumers and activists, Birmingham, AL, 2009.

In these regards, as well as in the continued consumer base supporting options for childbirth in the state, the vision of the founders of WomanCare and the Des Moines BirthPlace lives on in central Iowa. That vision is likely to come to fruition in an even more vibrant and family-friendly birth culture in the state, with increased options for consumers seeking to make informed choices about childbirth.

Book Reviews and Notices

Where the Bones Rest, by Roger Pavey. LeClaire, Iowa: Ablewise Books, 2011. 309 pp. \$11.95 paper.

Reviewer Patrick J. Jung is associate professor of history and anthropology at the Milwaukee School of Engineering. He is the author of *The Black Hawk War of 1832* (2007).

Where the Bones Rest is a respectable work of historical fiction about the Black Hawk War of 1832. It revolves around the first-person narratives of three persons who actually participated in the conflict: Namesa, a young Sauk mother; Dr. Addison Philleo, a newspaper editor and physician from Galena who fought under General Henry Dodge; and Rachel Hall, a white settler taken captive by the Indians. Like all good writers in this genre, Roger Pavey embellishes the story with fictional dialog and events that are nevertheless firmly grounded in factual history. There are a few errors. On page 2, Pavey states that Namesa's entire lodge belonged to the Osh-Kosh moiety of the Sauk tribe. That would have been impossible because membership in the two moieties was based on birth order. Thus, if a Sauk father was a Kish-co, his first-born child would be an Osh-Kosh, his second-born child a Kish-co, and so forth. Moreover, on page 27, Pavey states that General Henry Atkinson (whose name among the Indians was White Beaver) forced Black Hawk's followers to leave Saukenuk in 1831; in fact, it was General Edmund P. Gaines. These, however, are minor errors in what is otherwise a well-researched work of fiction. Black Hawk War buffs will certainly want to read this book, and its very readable text makes it accessible to younger readers (particularly those in high school) who will find it an excellent introduction to this fascinating Indian war that spanned the states of Illinois, Wisconsin, and Iowa in the summer of 1832.

The Pawnee Mission Letters, 1834–1851, edited by Richard E. Jensen. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2010. xxxii, 676 pp. Illustrations, map, notes, bibliography, index. \$60.00 paper.

Reviewer Bonnie Sue Lewis is associate professor of mission and Native American Christianity at the University of Dubuque Theological Seminary.

She is the author of *Creating Christian Indians: Native Clergy in the Presbyterian Church* (2003).

With the publication of *The Pawnee Mission Letters*, Richard Jensen has provided historians of church and academy another valuable resource for the study of the complex relationships among Native Americans, U.S. government employees, and Christian missionaries in the nineteenth century. These pages, drawn primarily from unpublished missionary archives of the Houghton Library at Harvard and the U.S. Office of Indian Affairs, reveal the often painful story of U.S. attempts to both “Christianize and civilize” peoples little understood and often misjudged.

The story of the embattled Pawnees was not uncommon. Caught between their traditional enemies — the Sioux — an increasing western migration, and the missionaries and Indian agents sent to “tame” them, the Pawnees were amazingly resilient until all three became a force too strong to withstand. Although the mission documents reveal much about Pawnee life through the eyes of the missionaries who traveled among and lived with the Pawnees for several years, the voices of the Pawnees themselves are missing. The voices of the missionaries and the government agents carry the story line. As the collection of letters, diaries, and depositions of the Pawnee missionaries and the Indian agents indicates, though, the greatest battles were among the missionaries themselves and between the missionaries and the government agents. In the end, neither church nor state was able to save the Pawnees from the devastation of invading wagon trains or Indian wars. The American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Mission closed the Pawnee mission within a dozen years of its opening; the Pawnees who escaped the advances of the emigrants and the marauding Sioux were eventually moved to Indian Territory, where their numbers continued to decline.

Within the nearly 600 pages of text, a story unfolds that includes intrigue, spirit, and the evolution of genuine friendships that made the breakup of the mission even more of a tragedy. The white community was torn apart by personality conflicts as well as conflicting views of theology, ideology, and practice. But the missionaries were also transformed by the experience. Even as their fury and frustrations with one another jeopardized their common goal of “uplifting” the Pawnees, they grew more attached to them. When wagon trains heightened hostilities with Indian tribes in the area, the Pawnees begged the missionaries to stay, even as the missionaries hid women and children, Pawnee and white, from raiding tribes. Most of the missionaries remained engaged with native peoples long after the mission closed.

Readers will find the brief subheadings for each entry, as well as the notes and bibliography, especially beneficial for research and understanding. *The Pawnee Mission Letters* is a welcome addition to the genre.

The Dubuque Shot Tower, edited by John Adelman. Charleston, SC: The History Press, 2011. 224 pp. Illustrations, map, appendix. \$24.99 paper.

Reviewer David Walker is professor of history at the University of Northern Iowa. He is working on several projects related to the history of Iowa Territory.

The 150-foot-tall Dubuque Shot Tower was constructed by local gunsmith George W. Rogers and opened for business in December 1856. Sixty-eight years earlier Julien Dubuque had refined lead ore in the Mines of Spain, stimulating a mining industry that brought white settlers to the tri-states area of Iowa, Illinois, and Wisconsin. Rogers's operation remained in business until sold to a competing St. Louis firm in July 1862, ending the tower's production. Surprisingly, there is no evidence that tower shot contributed to the Union army during the Civil War.

In 1931 the Dubuque Women's Club initiated an effort to preserve the structure, a cause that remained dormant for more than two decades until resurrected by the Dubuque Chamber of Commerce and the Dubuque County Historical Society. The Shot Tower was named to the National Register of Historic Places in October 1976, opening the door to funding from a variety of federal and state grants as well as private donors. Restoration work was completed in September 2010.

Many of the 48 relatively short essays in this book were written by American history and English students at Dubuque's Central Alternative High School. Based almost exclusively on local newspapers, the historical essays range from the impact of lead deposits on Native American communities to the present. Other contributions focus on interviews with local historians, experience conducting library research, class activities, student mentors, hands-on field work, and tourism. The publisher included numerous historical and contemporary illustrations that enhance the text; the appendix includes a valuable timeline. This is a superb example of engaging young students in the history of their community.

Iowa's Rural School System: A Lost Treasure, by Sandra Kessler Host. Omaha: Sandra Kessler Host and the Odebolt Historical Museum, 2011. 286 pp. Illustrations, maps, appendixes, bibliography. \$30.00 cloth.

Reviewer Shane Butterfield is visiting assistant professor of history at Grand Valley State University. His Ph.D. dissertation (University of Rochester, 2011) was "Reform, Symbolism, and the Demise of the Great Plains Rural School, 1890-1965."

Sandra Kessler Host, a self-professed "daughter of Iowa" (3), attempts to use Richland School #1 in Sac County to demonstrate the intimate relationship between Iowa's settlement and its rural school system. More specifically, Kessler claims that "the settlement of Iowa can be illustrated by the story of pioneer families over three generations and how they settled townships and operated . . . schools" (7) such as the one on which she focuses. Describing these pioneer families, primarily German Americans, gives the book its strong genealogical emphasis, as the school's founding families (and their descendants) receive rich attention. Kessler's own family is among them; indeed, this book's creation is largely a family project with overt personal ties. The heart of the book is the first third, which addresses in a very topical, stratified manner the settlement of rural Iowa as well as the nature of the rural school system. The final two-thirds comprises appendixes of beautifully reproduced primary sources and other borrowed materials.

The book contains a wealth of interesting documents and photographs; its importance to the fields of rural, educational, and Iowa history is limited, however. Much of the book is a compilation of items that appear elsewhere, including newspaper articles and genealogical histories. The first third, meanwhile, while offering plenty of background and detail, contains several notable gaps and little sustained argument. By focusing on genealogy, Host is able to show change over time, but there is little new here of interest to scholars. Perhaps the only recurring line of argument is her periodic assertion that "schools are to Iowa as Spanish Missions are to California," as "both became deeply entrenched in the psyche and heritage of their states and affected each state's settlement and cultural development" (7). Further, some of the appended documents and memorabilia are not well labeled, and Appendix B, about the local Richland Methodist Episcopal Church, seems misplaced in a book ostensibly about rural education's links to settlement. Indeed, readers should bear in mind that, regardless of its title, little more than half of the book is about schools.

Most readers will likely find the final one hundred pages, devoted to the genealogy of the school's "enduring [pioneer] families" (34), to be the book's aesthetic highlight, as, in addition to the innumerable

family histories, it contains dozens of magnificent photographs spanning a century. The implication of Host's work — that schools were central to rural Iowa's settlement and that many such settlements were established in a similar manner — is not new. The book's appeal, rather, stems from its impressive mix of documents, photos, and family histories, all of which make it an enjoyable, non-academic, one-volume introduction to the rural and educational histories of Sac County and, more generally, Iowa.

Sing Not War: The Lives of Union and Confederate Veterans in Gilded Age America, by James Marten. Civil War America Series. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011. xii, 339 pp. Illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. \$39.95 cloth.

Reviewer Brian Donovan is a Ph.D. candidate in history at the University of Iowa. His dissertation focuses on disability in midwestern soldiers' homes.

Nearly three million men served in the U.S. Civil War. This staggering number — nearly 9 percent of the *entire* prewar population — made “Civil War veteran” one of the few common identities available in the rapidly industrializing America of the Gilded Age. In 1875, according to one historian, if two men under the age of 35 met, chances were better than even that one of them was a Civil War veteran; and as late as 1890, Union veterans were still over 2 percent of the U.S. population.

Even though Civil War veterans represented a significant fraction of the Gilded Age's industrial, intellectual, and financial capital, as a group they remain understudied. Through organizations such as the Grand Army of the Republic (GAR) and the United Confederate Veterans (UCV), they dominated state and national politics for a generation, including the determination, many historians believe, of at least one presidential race (William Henry Harrison over Grover Cleveland in 1888). In the process, they voted themselves the most lavish pension system the United States had yet seen, such that by 1900, one of every three federal tax dollars was going to a Union veteran or his heirs.

James Marten's *Sing Not War* is an impressive attempt to fill in some of the gaps in our understanding of veterans' postwar lives and identities. Drawing on a rich array of primary sources, Marten identifies several common themes in the lives of the majority of veterans, and he examines the sites where veterans tended to cluster in Gilded Age culture. For instance, the massive state and federal soldiers' home system — the precursor of the Veterans Administration and today's U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs — provided asylum care for indigent veterans in nearly every state and territory in the country. The later

nineteenth century was deeply uneasy with institutionalized charity, however, and so the soldiers' homes became tourist attractions, with families taking advantage of discounted railroad rates to see the old soldiers marching around in their old Union blues or Confederate grays.

Marten is especially good at highlighting this type of cultural ambivalence. Even as veterans — particularly Union veterans — could move huge numbers of votes (and their attendant patronage dollars) by waving the bloody shirt, Gilded Age Americans were well aware that not all old soldiers were saints. Marten's previous historical work focused on alcohol and indigence at the National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers (NHDVS), and he brings the fruits of that scholarship to *Sing Not War*. By 1896, for instance, more than 30 saloons clustered near the entrances of the NHDVS's Northwestern Branch in Milwaukee, many of them bearing the names of Sherman, Grant, and other Union heroes and openly employing GAR men (156). As another historian of the NHDVS has noted, the sight of uniformed veterans passed out after spees was common in every city with a soldiers' home. Thus "old soldier" could be as much an epithet as an honorific, and "veteranizing" in army slang was often nearly synonymous with "bumming."

Given the scope of the topic, there are necessarily some lacunae in Marten's treatment of Civil War veterans. The approximately 10 percent of Union forces who were African American, for instance, appear almost nowhere in *Sing Not War*, and Confederate veterans' interactions with freedmen are similarly shorted. Part of this can no doubt be attributed to the acceptance of "Lost Cause" mythology in the Gilded Age. As David Blight details in *Race and Reunion*, the tropes and rituals of reconciliation were created by systematically eliminating African Americans from Civil War memory. Still, as Donald Shaffer shows in *After the Glory*, black ex-soldiers possessed a distinctive veteran culture that often intersected with that of whites, particularly at the officially integrated but de facto segregated national campfires of the GAR.

The quarter of all Union veterans who were foreign-born also get short shrift in *Sing Not War*. This is an especially rich topic for further exploration. Christian Samito's *Becoming American under Fire* traces the efforts of African American and Irish American soldiers to establish their identities as full members of the American body politic through their Civil War service; that effort could perhaps be repeated for other ethnic groups, particularly Germans, who fought in expatriate regiments. Here, too, the nature of the surviving sources takes some of the blame — much of our knowledge of veterans' organized activities comes directly or indirectly from the GAR and (to a lesser extent) the UCV, and those organizations, unfortunately, tended to nativism. Still,

the Union army, at least, really was the “melting pot” of our cultural mythology, and research here would be most welcome.

In all, though, Marten has done a commendable job of outlining the major themes of Civil War veterans’ studies. His scholarship is wide ranging, and his prose is excellent. He has a particularly good eye for the telling detail. For anyone interested in the postwar lives of Civil War soldiers, *Sing Not War* is highly recommended.

Iowa and the Death Penalty: A Troubled Relationship, 1834–1965, by Dick Haws. Ames: Dick Haws, 2010. vi, 316 pp. Illustrations, notes, index. \$25.00 cloth; \$9.99 e-book (from lulu.com).

Reviewer Michael J. Pfeifer is associate professor of history at John Jay College of Criminal Justice, The City University of New York. He is the author of *Rough Justice: Lynching and American Society, 1874–1947* (2004) and *The Roots of Rough Justice: Origins of American Lynching* (2011).

Iowa has had a complex relationship with the death penalty. Capital punishment was on the books from early territorial days — and Iowa’s first execution (that of Patrick O’Conner in the Dubuque lead mines in June 1834) actually predated territorial status and formal legal jurisdiction and institutions. Yet the Hawkeye State abolished the death penalty in 1872 only to restore it in 1878 after several well-publicized lynchings. Nearly a century later, in February 1965, at the urging of Governor Harold Hughes, the state legislature (dominated at the time by Democrats) abolished capital punishment.

Iowa’s ambivalence about the death penalty may have stemmed from the mixed origins of its settlers. Many, particularly in the northern portion of the state, were Yankees who tended to oppose the death penalty (Yankees had successfully ended the death penalty in the upper midwestern states of Michigan in 1846 and Wisconsin in 1853); they would be joined in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries by Scandinavians who were similarly skeptical of capital punishment. Others, especially in southern counties, had their cultural origins in the lower Midwest or the upper South, where traditions of communally based honor tended to back the death penalty. In total, state and federal authorities executed 45 men in Iowa from territorial days through abolition in 1965. In this well-researched and well-written book, Dick Haws narrates each of those legal executions (plus the 1834 extralegal execution of Patrick O’Conner).

After a short but insightful introduction surveying the history of the death penalty in Iowa, the book is organized in the form of brief chapters describing key aspects of each execution day in Iowa history

(some occasions involved multiple executions). Drawing on sources such as governors' correspondence on criminal matters (gubernatorial papers often include complete trial transcripts when those sentenced to death petitioned the governor), newspapers, and county histories, Haws interestingly charts the circumstances of the crimes that led to capital convictions, the efforts made at legal defense and appealing convictions, and the last moments of the condemned. A final, brief chapter describes abolition in 1965, noting that the Democratic wave in the previous year's election of Lyndon Johnson over Barry Goldwater offered Governor Harold Hughes (an ardent opponent of the death penalty) a decisive margin in the legislature for abolition.

The book merits a wide readership among those interested in the history of capital punishment and criminal justice in Iowa. It does have one weakness, however. Only the introduction bridges the individual case studies to offer a broader analysis of the history of the death penalty in Iowa; the introduction's comparison of legal executions over time is well considered and intriguing but invites a higher level of comparative analysis within the case studies of particular execution days. For instance, the introduction notes that 7 of the 46 men executed in Iowa were African Americans, including three men — Fred Allen, Robert Johnson, and Stanley Tramble — convicted of rape by a military court and hanged at Camp Dodge in 1918. All seven African Americans were convicted and executed between 1906 and 1925. Their case studies reveal rampant racism in press coverage and in prosecutorial tactics; analysis of broader regional and national trends in racialized criminal justice during the nadir of Jim Crow would have helped to fill out the picture here. Regardless of Haws's tendency to emphasize the particular detail over the larger pattern, lay and academic readers will find the book a valuable resource for understanding the historical contours of the death penalty in Iowa.

Women Writers of the American West, 1833–1927, by Nina Baym. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2011. 384 pp. Bibliography, index. \$40.00 cloth.

Reviewer Annamaria Formichella Elsdon is professor of English at Buena Vista University. She is the author of *Roman Fever: Domesticity and Nationalism in Nineteenth-Century American Women's Writing* (2004).

As the title suggests, this book is a comprehensive review of women's writing about the American West. Baym chooses as her starting point the first western book she could find, published by Mary Austin Holley about Texas in 1833, and concludes with Willa Cather's *Death*

Comes for the Archbishop (1927). In all, Baym discusses almost 640 books by 343 writers. She divides the West into nine subregions — Texas/Oklahoma, the Pacific Northwest, northern California and Nevada, Utah, Colorado, the Great Plains, the High Plains, Southern California and Nevada, and the Southwest — devoting a chapter to each. Within these chapters she includes a range of genres, from poetry to textbook, and some diversity of cultural and racial background, although the majority of authors are Anglo. Additional chapters include one about “road books” and a compilation of author biographies. Baym’s approach is broadly historical: “I sacrifice depth for breadth, describing rather than analyzing. . . . I don’t engage much with literary criticism, partly because literary criticism is skewed toward a small number of already-known women” (2).

Baym’s project is to open up the widest possible view of what women wrote during the settlement of the West. Her discussion focuses on three main interests: (1) how women make lives for themselves in the West, (2) how the West itself is represented by writers, and (3) how each author represents herself. Covering some 640 books (with a paragraph or so on each) allows Baym to gesture toward these general topic areas without going into much depth, yet some fascinating themes do arise in this exhaustive literary tour. The women writers come across as bold adventurers, and they depict a nation undaunted by the journey — frequently treacherous — toward a better life. The time frame interestingly parallels the transition from the True Woman of the nineteenth century to the New Woman of the twentieth, and the western texts Baym discusses offer glimpses of that cultural shift. The idea of the West develops from a geographical definition into a more thematic and ideological significance, with such concepts as athletic prowess, health, freedom, and open space dominating the discourse.

Although Baym’s definition of the West excludes Iowa geographically, Iowa readers might be interested in how the ideology of the West informs their own cultural history. Certainly notions of freedom from urban stresses and profound connection to the land will resonate with many midwesterners. Baym’s reflections on Nebraska — which she does include in her chapter on the Great Plains — will likely be of interest to Iowans, as it is a bordering state.

Women Writers of the American West offers readers a unique view of a region typically associated with male writers and masculinist ideology. It offers a much-needed corrective to the idea that the American West was solely the domain of cowboys and scoundrels. As Baym ably illustrates, independent women sought the freedom of the West, settled new frontiers, and wrote memorable books about the experience.

Lottie's Diary, by Lottie Wetmore; edited by Joan Arnold. Ann Arbor, MI: Rock Branch Productions, 2010. 100 pp. Illustrations, genealogical data, notes, bibliography, index. \$14.95 paper.

Reviewer Anne Beiser Allen is an independent researcher and writer on mid-western history. Her articles have won the State Historical Society of Iowa's Throne-Aldrich Award in 2003 and the Nebraska Historical Society's James Sellers Award in 2010.

Lottie's Diary provides a snapshot of life on a northwest Iowa farm in the 1890s. Lottie Wetmore began the diary when she went with her family to the Chicago World's Fair in September 1893, and it ends a year-and-a-half later, a few months before her death from tuberculosis in October 1895. The diary itself fills only one-third of the book. The remainder consists of family papers, photographs, and an extensive genealogy of the Wetmore family going back to the 1630s, gathered and edited by Joan Arnold, Lottie's great-niece. Of particular interest is Lottie's mother's description of her own trip to the World Cotton Centennial in New Orleans in 1885.

In her diary, Lottie shows us the challenges nineteenth-century Protestant theology sometimes presented to everyday people. She first begins to question the easy faith of her childhood when a neighbor and close friend dies, but eventually regains a deeper understanding after attending a revival, followed by the personal counseling of a sympathetic pastor. The poignant entries of her last year allow readers to share the uncertainties, discomfort, and fears of a young woman who suffered from a disease that was one of the major health problems of her time. The background material illustrates some of the ways that the changes of the early twentieth century affected the lives of people in small Iowa towns by describing the subsequent lives of Lottie's siblings and close relatives. The book will appeal to those interested in genealogy or rural life in the Midwest at the turn of the previous century.

An Iowa Schoolma'am: Letters of Elizabeth "Bess" Corey, 1904-1908, edited by Philip L. Gerber and Charlotte M. Wright. A Bur Oak Book. Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2011. xxxi, 191 pp. Illustrations, maps, notes, bibliography, index. \$25.00 paper.

Reviewer Karen Leroux is associate professor of history at Drake University. Her research and writing focus on the histories of women, work, and education.

This edited volume of letters allows readers to peer into the life of a young country schoolteacher in turn-of-the-twentieth-century Iowa.

Equipped with only a ninth-grade education and attendance at a summer teachers' institute, Bess Corey began teaching at age 17, shortly after her father's death. The letters, written to her mother and siblings, offer insights into this young woman's journey from farm to schoolhouse at a time when one-room schools were the norm, not only in Iowa, but across many parts of the nation. The volume represents a prequel to *Bachelor Bess*, a 1990 edited collection of Corey's letters written home after she set out to homestead in South Dakota in 1909.

Corey's letters remind us that country schools provided paid work for women who needed it. Lacking alternatives for earning income, young women often had to leave home to teach, even if only to venture as far as a neighboring county. The letters illuminate the range of new relations teachers had to negotiate as they established their authority with parents, students, and county superintendents, made friends and acquaintances in the community, and tried to adapt to the families with whom they boarded. Through Corey's descriptions of inadequate space and furnishings, late and meager meals, and interpersonal conflicts, readers will grasp that teaching and boarding were not always conducive to fostering women teachers' independence or autonomy. While the letters attest to Corey's robust and resilient personality, they also demonstrate how social practices and traditional hierarchies informed her choices.

Some of Corey's letters mark the sharp social differences between her world and ours. Corey insists that she cannot bring herself to write the "unwritable" (93) things a student's father said to her. Yet she does not hesitate to use the word "nigger" (73, 80), once to describe white students in blackface; and on several occasions she pokes fun at European immigrant dialects, showing the extent to which norms of social conduct have changed.

Other letters speak to gendered experiences that continue to resonate. When Corey advises holding students back a grade, we see a young teacher reacting to a father in a struggle over public and private authority. Corey's letters also help us imagine how young rural women navigated the dangers of moving about in public, issues more typically explored in urban histories of gender. Corey dares to board a freight train rather than wait hours for the scheduled passenger train, rationalizing that "what men have done, women may do" (63). Yet, as a young woman living apart from family, she also realizes her vulnerability. Another letter describes her declining a ride home from two young men, concerned that their conduct might not be gentlemanly. The letters help us see a young woman making her way through the rural landscape of gender and other hierarchical relations.

This volume is likely to appeal to readers curious about rural women's lives, as well as instructors teaching the history of women and education. The folksy informality of the letters will likely draw some readers in; others may find the tone and diction from another era difficult to penetrate at times. Enhancing readers' understanding of Corey's world is a generous selection of archival photographs, maps, and images. Finally, a valuable foreword by Paul Theobald contextualizes the letters in the history of rural education and offers well-selected reading recommendations to guide further research. While the volume stands alone, it could also be used as a revealing contrast to the historical literature on urban women teachers, calling attention to the wide range of schools and women who taught them at the turn of the twentieth century.

Proving Up: Domesticating Land in U.S. History, by Lisi Krall. Albany: SUNY Press, 2010. xx, 132 pp. Notes, bibliography, index. \$65.00 cloth.

Reviewer James W. Oberly is professor of history at the University of Wisconsin–Eau Claire. He is the author of *Sixty Million Acres: American Veterans and Public Lands before the Civil War* (1990).

Economist Lisi Krall has written a slim volume that starts with a bang – a murder, actually – and ends with a digression. In short, this is a frustrating book to read and review. In the preface, Krall tells the story of her grandfather, William Krall, who homesteaded a parcel of land in Wyoming. Krall filed his claim to the homestead in 1918 and had three years to “prove up” that claim, that is, to show improvements, such as crops planted and acreage fenced, to the local Land Office staff in order to obtain title to the homestead. To make improvements, Krall needed access to water. In that pursuit, he soon quarreled with his neighbor, Steve Lasich, over water rights. The dispute escalated in the summer of 1920, culminating when Lasich shot and killed Krall. When finally brought to trial, the defendant managed to convince a jury that the victim had it coming. The author wonders what type of land system could place her grandfather in the position where he was able to stake a claim yet unable to gain access to water and thereby improve his homestead as required by law in order to receive fee simple title. The author muses that she originally intended to write a book on this family tragedy but instead decided to write an institutional economic history of the anomalies and peculiarities of the U.S. public land system. The author pays tribute to Karl Polyani, Douglass North, and other institutional economists in trying to understand why a dysfunctional land system served William Krall and others so badly.

The book proper begins with an essay on Thomas Jefferson and the creation of what the author calls an “agrarian ethos” of the individual landowning farm proprietor. In this first chapter, the author maintains that because of Jefferson’s influence, the United States pursued a public land policy in support of sales and grants to individual landowning farmers. Chapters two through four recite, entirely from secondary sources, the history of U.S. public land policy, or, more precisely, the history of public land legislation passed by Congress. There is no treatment of how the General Land Office operated to implement, or not, congressional policy. These chapters depend largely on the work of Paul W. Gates; indeed, Krall almost never cites anything written after 1968. The dated histories she consulted are all treated in the present tense, as if Fred Shannon or Roy Robbins were alive and writing today. Krall is on surer ground when she brings in her economics expertise, notably in chapter two in discussing a subject of considerable scholarly research in Iowa history: land speculation. She writes that the speculator was a “rent-seeker,” or, as the type is known in financial markets, an arbitrager, trying to make money on inefficiencies in the market. This reader wished the author had expanded on this insight into why market inefficiencies arose and how, if at all, markets worked or did not work to correct economic rents.

A fifth chapter on an American “wilderness ethos” covers congressional legislation, notably the Wilderness Act of 1964. It is unclear why the author included this chapter. Perhaps it was to suggest that the Wyoming in which William Krall attempted to start a ranch in 1918 should never have been open to homesteading or other private ownership of the land. However, the book never does return to Wyoming. The verdict of the Wyoming jury in the 1921 murder trial of Steve Lasich was surely unjust to William Krall; I have my own Scotch verdict on Lisi Krall’s thesis that her grandfather was a victim of the dysfunctional American public land system: not proven.

Ben Shahn’s American Scene: Photographs 1938, by John Raeburn. Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2010. xiii, 190 pp. Illustrations, notes, index. \$75.00 cloth; \$30.00 paper.

Reviewer Constance B. Schulz is Distinguished Professor Emeritus at the University of South Carolina. She has edited collections of documentary photographs from the 1930s and 1940s for South Carolina and Kansas.

The Farm Security Administration (FSA) was an agency created to deal with problems of the nation’s poorest farmers during the Great Depression, first in 1935 as the Resettlement Administration, then re-

named and located within the Department of Agriculture in 1937. It is best known today, however, not for its larger successes, but for a small department within it, the Historical Section, usually referred to by the FSA initials of the parent agency. Headed by Roy Emerson Stryker, the FSA's Historical Section produced more than 180,000 photographs of America and Americans between 1935 and 1943. The photographs, housed since 1943 at the Library of Congress's Prints and Photographs Division and now digitized and available for all to see on the library's website, were rediscovered by scholars in the 1960s. Numerous books have since appeared that use them as illustrations of the impact of the Depression, comment on them as New Deal propaganda, or reproduce ones from a particular state as a photographic album of state history.

Stryker directed the work of more than 50 photographers; this study is an in-depth analysis of the work of only one of them (Ben Shahn) produced within the space of a single summer (1938) in a handful of towns in central Ohio. Ben Shahn (1898–1969) is best known for the murals he painted in public buildings during the Depression, but he had traveled in the South as a photographer for the Resettlement Administration in 1935–36. Early in 1938, between commissions for murals, he asked Stryker for a photographic assignment to central Ohio. (His wife, Bernarda, was staying with her parents in Columbus awaiting the birth of their second child.) Stryker hired him and allowed him to spend the summer there documenting the harvest rather than requiring him to move on after a week, the usual practice of such assignments. Shahn did photograph the Ohio harvest, but the 900 photographs he took that summer also included 320 that surveyed small-town life.

Raeburn's achievement is a remarkable one. Instead of using the photographs as illustrations or memorabilia, they serve as the primary evidence for his well-argued thesis that by the late 1930s the towns in this part of Ohio, and perhaps by extension others throughout the rural Midwest, were beginning to experience the economic and social decline that has usually been traced to the post-World War II expansion of interstate highways and the resulting exponential growth of urban areas. In developing his argument from a relatively small body of photographs, 100 of which are reproduced in the book interspersed with the texts that describe them, Raeburn has analyzed the images carefully. Employing a sophisticated reading of the visual evidence, Raeburn explores the different experiences the photographs reveal based on the class, race, or gender of those captured by the camera's carefully framed images.

Iowans may find this thesis, and the images used in support of it, an intriguing suggestion for studying the Depression-era experiences of their own small towns. There are 2,170 images of Iowa in the FSA collection digitized and available online. John Zielinski published a selection of these in *Unknown Iowa: Farm Security Photos, 1936–1941* (1977), but most of the photographs he selected are of rural scenes. Iowa towns that appear in a name search of the online catalog include Spencer, Clinton, Iowa Falls, and Woodbine. Ames is listed with 284 photographs. Perhaps Raeburn's thesis will stimulate those who read his work to study the more scattered Iowa small-town photographs, taken by several different photographers, to discover for themselves the pleasures of FSA photography.

Tri-Faith America: How Catholics and Jews Held Postwar America to Its Protestant Promise, by Kevin M. Schultz. New York: Oxford University Press, 2011. viii, 256 pp. Notes, index. \$34.95 cloth.

Reviewer Bill R. Douglas lives and works in Des Moines. He has written articles for the *Annals of Iowa*, *Minnesota History*, and *Quaker History*.

The religious shift in the United States from early twentieth-century Protestant hegemony to the present-day reign of diversity proceeded in stages, Kevin Schultz argues persuasively in *Tri-Faith America*. My major problem with this fine book is its subtitle: as I read it, it implies that Protestants were somehow shamed into expanding the franchise. As the book makes clear, more often than not Protestants took the lead, and of course Catholics and Jews sometimes had their own agendas. For that matter, the subtitle's adjective "postwar" slights Schultz's work in part one in framing the 1920s and 1930s as decades when the tri-faith project got underway. Most of that section deals with the pioneering work of the National Council of Christians and Jews (NCCJ) and its forgotten hero, Everett Clinchy, but Schultz also points to the 1924 founding of the University of Iowa's School of Religion, which became a model for tri-faith academic inquiry at other American universities. NCCJ's tactic of sending out a "brotherhood trio" of a priest, a minister, and a rabbi on speaking tours included a Des Moines team nicknamed the "Corn Belt Crusaders" — clearly a term coined before sensitivity to Muslim concerns registered on the liberal consciousness. But in a state where rural Catholics had reason to fear the Ku Klux Klan, Des Moines Bishop Gerald Bergan would later claim, notes Schultz, that the trio "had fundamentally changed the culture of Iowa."

Schultz's examination of the tri-faith project after World War II is more diffuse, but the cumulative effect is to help explain how the country got closer to religious equality. Chapters on the Cold War consensus, suburbia, public schools, and the U.S. census show how — as Will Herberg argued in his popular book, *Protestant, Catholic, Jew* — Protestants were clearly sharing space. The chapter on the 1960 census, and the debate about whether it would inquire as to religious affiliation, is particularly interesting. As historians, of course, we're lined up on the give-us-the-information side (I'm appalled by the government spying that took place on U.S. citizens during World War I, but I'm still going to use that information) — but the late 1950s conflict is intriguing, with its plausible arguments from religious identity on both sides. The Catholic hierarchy pushed for a religious question on the 1960 census, confident that the results would confirm that the Catholic church was the largest religious institution in the country. Jewish organizations understandably blanched at the prospect: The abuse of the census in Nazi Germany that led to targeting victims was still an open sore; the prospect that Jewish respondents would correlate with higher income groups also fed into fears that anti-Semitic sentiments might be stoked. In neither the Catholic nor Jewish communities was the position monolithic, but the prospect of a determined Jewish opposition spooked the Census Bureau into dropping the question.

As Schultz realizes, concentrating on religious discrimination could obscure other injustices. He mentions in passing (52) the downplaying of economic inequality; and chapter 8, the final chapter before the conclusion, deals with race. But if race was too often ignored by people of faith between 1920 and 1960, Schultz argues intriguingly that the struggle for religious equality helped create a language for the civil rights movement. Moreover, the civil rights movement often worked in a tri-faith context.

Tri-Faith America suggests or could contribute to fruitful topics for Iowa religious history researchers, such as the new assertiveness of Catholics in the 1920s and 1930s; the partnership between Rev. Stoddard Lane and Rabbi Eugene Mannheimer in shepherding Des Moines toward interfaith understanding in the 1930s and 1940s; and the all-Protestant Des Moines Area Council of Churches' slow transformation in the 1970s to a multi-faith organization, the Des Moines Area Religious Council.

Bishop Bergan's claim — that naming the evil would exorcise it — was probably overstated: All three of the "tri-faiths" have fractured into two opposing entities. It is the gift of *Tri-Faith America* that the possibility of religious cooperation has been documented.

The History of the Iowa Law School, 1865–2010, edited by N. William Hines. Iowa City: University of Iowa College of Law, 2011. xiii, 625 pp. Illustrations, notes, tables, appendix. \$19.99 cloth.

Reviewer David N. Atkinson is Curators' Professor Emeritus in the Department of Political Science and School of Law at the University of Missouri-Kansas City and an alum of the Iowa Law School.

This history of the Iowa Law School consists of 15 chapters, the first eight of which chronicle the history of the school from its founding in 1865 through the present; the remaining chapters are topical, detailing the history of the law library (one of the largest in the nation), the *Iowa Law Review* and other journals published by the Law School, international legal education, the teaching of professional skills, continuing legal education, women students in the Law School, and the enrollment of minorities. The volume includes copious footnotes, with information of specialized interest on all aspects of the Law School's history as well as many fascinating stories and anecdotes about deans and faculty members. It is a volume that will especially appeal to former faculty, staff, and graduates of the Iowa Law School.

The chronological chapters are organized by the tenure of the various deans, one of whom was Wiley B. Rutledge, whose strong support of President Franklin Roosevelt's court-packing proposal brought him to the president's attention and eventually helped to earn him an appointment to the U.S. Supreme Court. Dean Rutledge thought it was important for first-year students to be introduced to the judicial process and public law issues in addition to private law subjects. Although he was generally respected by the faculty, most of them disagreed with his political views.

Samuel Fahr's chapter on the long and successful deanship of Mason Ladd is especially colorful. Dean Ladd was nationally known in the field of evidence and always taught a course on the subject, which was taken by virtually all of the students. In the classroom, Dean Ladd's distinctive, high-pitched tenor voice could become quite piercing when he got excited. His riveting classroom style and his command of the law of evidence made him an extraordinarily gifted teacher.

The next dean, David Vernon, had a short but productive five-year tenure. He thought the Law School should move more toward a graduate school model, with small classes and more student-teacher interaction. In order to achieve that goal, it was necessary to significantly increase the size of the faculty, which he accomplished.

N. William Hines served as dean for 28 years. There were many positive changes during that period. Faculty became more involved in decision making, the Law School moved into its present facility (the

Boyd Law Building), and it achieved national prominence through the ratings published by *U.S. News & World Report*. During the last 15 years of Hines's deanship, the school averaged twenty-first in the nation among all schools and seventh among public law schools, and the law library became second in size only to Harvard's.

Future editions might usefully include an index and a chapter on alumni. There is, however, a highly readable chapter on women students, recounting the difficulties and genuine hardships women have had getting a legal education. The Iowa experience was fairly typical of the national situation.

The Organization of American Historians and the Writing and Teaching of American History, edited by Richard S. Kirkendall. New York: Oxford University Press, 2011. xii, 373 pp. Illustrations, notes, appendix. \$99.00 cloth; \$29.95 paper.

Reviewer Jon Lauck is senior advisor to South Dakota Senator John Thune. His article, "The Prairie Historians and the Foundations of Midwestern History," will appear in the Spring 2012 issue of the *Annals of Iowa*.

In the late nineteenth century, there were few academic historians in the United States and those few focused mostly on the history of New England and Europe. Historians in the American West, which included anything west of the forks of the Ohio River, were rare and their region's history almost completely neglected. The University of Wisconsin's Frederick Jackson Turner finally sparked an organized effort to focus on midwestern and western history, and his acolytes ultimately launched the Mississippi Valley Historical Association (MVHA) to formalize the movement. University of Iowa professors Benjamin Shambaugh and Louis Pelzer were among the earliest and strongest leaders of the MVHA.

The MVHA was organized in Lincoln, Nebraska, in 1907, and convened its first conference at Lake Minnetonka, Minnesota, in 1908; its successor body, the Organization of American Historians (OAH), reconvened in nearby Minneapolis in 2007. At that centennial conference, Richard Kirkendall, a former executive secretary of the OAH and one-time professor of history at Iowa State University, spearheaded the organization of panels and papers considering the OAH's century of activity. Kirkendall then organized the publication of much of this commentary into *The Organization of American Historians and the Writing and Teaching of American History*, an impressive collection that presents many sides of the OAH story. Michael Kammen sets the stage for the longer story of the OAH with a masterful chapter on the or-

ganization's beginnings that accounts for its midwestern origins and focus. A variety of chapters discuss the growth and evolution of the organization and the emergence of new fields of study. William Leuchtenburg wryly comments on what the founders of the old MVHA would have thought of the new field of "Queer Studies."

Historians tend to believe that during the early years of the OAH its members focused only on political, economic, military, and diplomatic history, or so-called "traditional history." But as Kammen and Frederick Hoxie note, the early historians of the Mississippi Valley devoted considerable energy to the history of American Indians. Stephanie Shaw also explains how prominent social history was from the launch of the MVHA. Historians who were products of the valley, such as Merle Curti (from Papillion, Nebraska), also spurred the development of the field of intellectual history in the 1940s (even though fellow midwesterner Perry Miller dismissed Curti's opus, *The Growth of American Thought*, as a "seed catalogue"). Karl Brooks notes how the old MVHA pioneered the field of environmental history.

Other fields, such as gender, race, and sexuality were not, however, prominent topics during the early decades of the OAH, but their rise to power is finely explained in this volume. Some of the doubts about the changes wrought in the profession by these new fields are also recounted. Joan Hoff, who served as executive director of the OAH from 1981 to 1988, now admits to doubts about the excessive attention commanded by these new fields and the attendant rise of postmodern theory. Hoff explains that the profession has lost its audience to popular historians, who still write about war and peace and politics and economics. Hoff believes that the profession is in a "state of crisis" and has been "damaged by the postmodern theories and deconstructionist methodologies that had been largely imported from abroad since the 1960s" (114). Many historians agree with Hoff, as would, most surely, the creators of the MVHA.

After the founding of the MVHA, James Patterson notes, the study of political history was second only to studies of the Midwest and the frontier. By the end of the twentieth century, however, political history had been displaced by the "race/class/gender paradigm" as the OAH's most active field of inquiry. Patterson laments the intentional marginalization of political history within the profession and notes how "some younger colleagues seemed to regard political historians as old-fashioned has-beens who were interested only in the maneuvering of white male elites." The negative attitude toward political historians within the profession is, Patterson hopes, losing some of its intensity, a development that can only be good for the broader civic culture.

In his organization of the book, Kirkendall included many important voices and made many wise choices. For example, he takes the broader mission of historians into consideration and includes lengthy sections on both the publication of historical works and the teaching of history. The book also includes essays about the thousands of historians who do not work in academic history departments and traces how these “public historians” have built a successful subfield.

On the whole, this volume is a must read for practicing historians of the United States. It smartly covers many topics, but would have benefited from greater attention to the rise and fall of the field of mid-western history, out of which the MVHA emerged, and to the field of western history, which now flourishes thanks to the foundational work of the founders of the MVHA.

American Individualism: How a New Generation of Conservatives Can Save the Republican Party, by Margaret Hoover. New York: Crown Forum, 2011. 248 pp. Notes. \$24.99 cloth.

Reviewer Glen Jeanson is professor of history at the University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee. His articles and books about Herbert Hoover include *The Life of Herbert Hoover: The Presidency, 1928–1933* (forthcoming, 2012).

Margaret Hoover, the great-granddaughter of Herbert Hoover, has written a timely book — part history, part political philosophy, and part memoir. For historians, there is substantial detail about Herbert Hoover. For Iowa readers interested in Hoover lore, the book has much to offer. It includes a rich historical vein, although it is not purely historical. The author draws on the work of eminent Hoover scholars, especially in chapter one, which provides a capsule summary of Herbert Hoover’s career. The Iowa-born president’s 1922 treatise, *American Individualism*, provides the inspiration for this new work.

The Quaker president and his great-granddaughter have much in common: a philosophy whose mantra is tolerance, acceptance of a diversity of ideas, moderation, and inclusiveness. Both demonstrate a mixture of idealism, realism, and common sense. Like Herbert and Lou Henry Hoover, Margaret is erudite, sophisticated, cosmopolitan, and a world traveler. She has lived abroad, learned Spanish and Chinese, and is drawn to international interests and cultures. Nonetheless, like her famous relatives, she considers America a singular nation, a land of opportunity. Still, equality of opportunity does not ensure equality of outcome. A centrist Republican, she rejects a rule-or-ruin philosophy and explains that parties that fail to change inevitably are left behind.

Growing up, Margaret was confronted by people who demonized Herbert Hoover; she inherited the weight of history's disapproval. The family bore the scars of the 1932 election for generations. Her eighth-grade textbook blamed the Iowa native for the stock market crash and the nation's worst depression. Margaret's father had to defend himself on school playgrounds in the 1950s; in the 1990s, as a teenager, she realized that the world perceived Hoover as a cartoon villain. The crucible of conflict made her a strong individualist and an activist determined to make a difference. Individuality was the greatest gift Hoover bequeathed to her.

Margaret leads the reader on a guided tour of Republican factions and traces their evolution. She demonstrates an encyclopedic knowledge of the varieties of conservatism and offers a prescription as to how Republicans can rise above their internecine feuding, capture the White House and Congress, and change the direction of the country. Her focus is on the millennial generation, born between the late 1980s and the mid-1990s, the largest generation in history, the most technologically savvy, and the most racially diverse; and they are fiscally conservative but socially liberal. The chief purpose of the book is to provide a blueprint to offer them a rationale for choosing the GOP.

The author devotes a chapter to each major issue likely to dominate the 2012 election. Hoover and the millennial generation favor a positive government that is a problem solver rather than dogmatic and does not devolve into an intrusive, leviathan state. The crucial issue — and the potentially winning one for Republicans — is the economy. The national debt will eventually have to be paid; if we do not address the issue, the millennial generation will be stuck with the tab, minus the benefits. Among the generation's priorities are jobs, financial security, and education. Hoover calls for education reform, immigration reform within secure borders, market-based health-care reform, and practical approaches to environmental conservation. She considers such issues as gay marriage and abortion rights divisive and urges respect for opposing viewpoints. Inflexibility on such issues, she argues, will polarize the party and provide few real benefits. A moderate feminist, she dismisses the idea of a conspiracy of male oppression and rejects the adoption of a victim mentality. The real frontiers for feminism lie in underdeveloped, authoritarian nations. An environmentalist, she believes that some zealous environmentalists never actually venture outdoors and that climate change is incremental, not imminent. Neither is America the world's greatest polluter.

American Individualism is vividly and passionately written, cogently argued, and solidly grounded in research. It is interspersed with poi-

gnant details about the author's life story, intertwined with her family's history. The book is moderate in tone and largely nonjudgmental, although the author minces no words about the threat of Islamic terrorism. She abhors intellectual dishonesty and is dubious about anyone who represents a single-issue constituency or focuses exclusively on a single cause. The GOP, she concludes, should avoid a litmus test and resist placing blame and campaigning on clichés. *American Individualism* eschews polemics and calls for personal and community responsibility. The epistle reminds us as well of the humanitarian, moral, and spiritual dimensions of life that motivated Herbert Hoover.

New on the Shelves

“New on the Shelves” is a list of recent additions to the collections of the State Historical Society of Iowa. It includes manuscripts, audio-visual materials, and published materials recently acquired or newly processed that we think might be of interest to the readers of the *Annals of Iowa*. The “DM” or “IC” at the end of each entry denotes whether the item is held in Des Moines or Iowa City.

Manuscripts

Belknap, Horace. Journal. 1 vol., 1850. Journal kept by Iowan Horace Belknap – a Yale-educated physician and minister – documenting his overland journey from Grandview (Louisa County) to California during the 1850 gold rush. Belknap provides an account of the logistics of his wagon train; wildlife, botanical specimens, and geological features observed; Native American encounters; communities visited; local history and lore obtained; and the general challenges of the expedition. DM.

Des Moines Metropolitan Transit Authority. Records. 46 ft., ca. 1885–1960. Records of the Des Moines Metropolitan Transit Authority, including deeds, contracts, correspondence, minutes, publications, reports, and various legal documents. DM.

DeTar, Josiah. 4 Documents, 1863. Civil War letters of Josiah DeTar of the 6th Iowa Infantry, Co. E. [Addition to collection.] DM.

Emerick, Billie Edward and John W. Papers. 51 documents, 1 photograph, 1 badge, 1941–1945. Letters and official documents related to the World War II service of Des Moines brothers Billie Edward Emerick, a U.S. Marine taken prisoner on Wake Island in December 1941, and John Emerick, a U.S. Navy electrician’s mate, who perished in a torpedo attack on the submarine U.S.S. *Corvina* in 1943. The collection includes brief postcards Billie Emerick sent to his family while a prisoner of war at Fukuoka, Japan. DM.

Harlan, Aaron W. Papers. ½ ft., ca. 1844–ca. 1900. Papers of Aaron W. Harlan, pioneer resident of Croton (Lee County), including letters; his journal of a steamboat trip from Muscatine to St. Paul, Minnesota, in 1881; his original poem about the Civil War Battle of Athens, Missouri; ephemera; and photographs. DM.

Hughes, Lenore and Edythe. Papers. ¼ ft., 1920s. Two notebooks kept by Lenore Hughes while a student at the Queen City College of Dressmaking and Tailoring, Des Moines, ca. 1920; and a scrapbook of Edythe Hughes related to her education at Des Moines College and the Queen City school. Several photos of Des Moines College (University) are included.

Iowa Quilters Guild. Records. 1 ft., 1982–2009. Newsletters, programs, and member rosters of this guild. DM.

Reiff, Christine. Papers. 1 ft., 1931–1960s. Combined journal and scrapbooks maintained by Christine Reiff of Early covering local and national events, 1931–1960s; a record book of the Early Women’s Club, 1947–1950; and photographs, including views of the Reiff dry goods store. DM.

Smith, Donald “Smokey.” Papers. 2 ft., 1940s–1970s. Documents, ephemera, and photographs relating to the career of Donald “Smokey” Smith (Des Moines), nationally known country western music performer, radio personality, and concert promoter. DM.

Volk, Douglas. Papers. 36 documents and one black-and-white photograph, 1912–13. Correspondence of artist Douglas Volk concerning his commission to paint a mural (*The Coming of the White Man*) for the Polk County Courthouse. Includes correspondence with Des Moines designer D. J. Linane and artists Russell Cowles and Charles Atherton Cumming; contracts and specifications for the mural; and an interior photo of the courthouse showing the space where the mural was to be installed. DM.

Audio-Visual Materials

Allison, William Boyd. 1 black-and-white photograph, ca. 1905. Portrait of Senator William Boyd Allison, autographed and presented to his personal attorney, Judge Benjamin W. Lacy of Dubuque, ca. 1905. Photographer: Clinedinst, Washington, D.C. DM.

Automobile culture. 1 photo album (21 black-and-white photographs), 1911. Photo album containing 21 photos documenting a 1911 automobile tour by an unidentified Iowa family as they visit roadside attractions, camp, picnic, and perform maintenance on their vehicle. DM.

Des Moines – Manufacturing. 5 black-and-white photographs, 1940s. Fire and security personnel of the Des Moines Ordnance Plant, ca. 1942; Marquette Cement Manufacturing Company, 1940. DM.

Iowa Postcards. 24 lithographic postcards, ca. 1910–1940s. Postcard views of Iowa communities: horse barn on Iowa State Fairgrounds (Des Moines); Lee County Courthouse (Ft. Madison); First Methodist Church (Mt. Pleasant); chapel (Fayette); Union Park Electric Company station and cars, Chautauqua event, steamers on the Mississippi River (Dubuque); Warden Arcade (Fort Dodge); various views (Decorah). DM.

Iowa Stereographs. 13 stereographs, 1880s–1890s. Views of Iowa State Capitol, Soldiers and Sailors Monument, depot (Radcliffe), Iowa Building at the World Columbian Exposition, railroad cut (Iowa City), and Buffalo Bill Cody Wild West Show parade (Des Moines). DM.

Klein, Henry. 20 35mm color slides, 1950. Klein’s views of Des Moines during 1950 flooding. DM.

Phillips, Earl L. 6 black-and-white photographs, 1947. Views of breached Johnson Ditch levee and Nishnabotna River at Hamburg following flooding of July 1947. Photos taken by civil engineer Earl L. Phillips from Numa, who specialized in flood control. [Addition to previous donation.] DM.

Sims, Ronald. 33 prints, 74 black-and-white negatives, 1950s–2000s. 15 35mm slides. Photography by Sims documenting changes to the Des Moines urban landscape following various demolition and construction projects. DM.

Published Materials

Alexander Rommel, the Iowa Conservatory of Music, and Music Today at Iowa Wesleyan, by Louis A. Haselmayer. Mt. Pleasant: Iowa Wesleyan College, 1977. 8 pp. IC.

American Road: The Story of an Epic Transcontinental Journey at the Dawn of the Motor Age, by Pete Davies. New York: H. Holt, 2002. 274 pp., + 16 pp. of plates. IC.

American Traditions in Rural Government, by Geddes W. Rutherford. N.p., [1935?]. 16 pp. IC.

Because Someone Cared, by Joan L. Hoff. Smithtown, NY: Exposition Press, 1982. xiii, 119 pp. *History of Quakerdale (formerly White's Iowa Manual Labor Institute, a residential educational institution for disadvantaged children sponsored by the Iowa Yearly Meeting of Friends)*. IC.

Biography of a Steamboat Captain: John Van Dyke and His Family from Ulster, Pennsylvania to Keokuk, Iowa, by Nancy Van Dyke-Dickison. N.p., 2011. 101 pp. IC.

“‘Breathing the Freedom’s Air’: The African American Struggle for Equal Citizenship in Iowa, 1830–1900,” by David Junius Brodnax Sr. Ph.D. thesis, Northwestern University, 2007. 456 pp. IC.

The Colored School Controversy in Davenport, Iowa: News Articles and Minutes of City Board of Education Meetings, 1858–1860, compiled by Craig Klein. N.p., 2006. 23 pp. IC.

Controlling Grasshoppers in Iowa, by C. J. Drake and G. C. Decker. Iowa State College Extension Bulletin 182. [Ames: Iowa State College Extension Service], 1932. 16 pp. IC.

Davenport’s WOC AM-FM-TV, by David T. Coopman. Images of America Series. Charleston, SC: Arcadia Pub., 2010. 127 pp. IC.

Directory of Sawmills and Veneer Mills of Iowa. Ames: Iowa State University of Science and Technology Cooperative Extension Service, 1967. 17 pp. IC.

The Enigma of Theresa Dolezal Feldwert and the Black Angel, by Timothy C. Parott. 2nd ed. Iowa City, 2010. 54 pp. IC.

Foundations: The Letters of Mathias Loras, D.D., Bishop of Dubuque, edited by Robert F. Klein, assisted by Sr. Benvenuta Bras. Dubuque: Center for Dubuque History, Loras College Press, 2004. xiii, 987 pp. IC.

"Hacia el Ranchito: Mexican Immigrants, Farming and Sustainable Rural Livelihoods in Iowa," by Hannah Kathryn Lewis. M.S. thesis, Iowa State University, 2007. 94 pp. IC.

Handbook of Iowa Weeds, by L. H. Pammel, Charlotte M. King, and M. H. Burns. Extension Service Bulletin 139. Ames: [Iowa State College Extension Service, 1926]. 64 pp. IC.

The History of the Museum House in Shell Rock, Iowa, by Linda Betsinger McCann for the Shell Rock Community Historical Society. [Shell Rock: Shell Rock Community Historical Society], 2007. 45 pp. IC.

The Home for the Friendless: Finding Hope, Love, and Family, by Betty Auchard. Las Vegas, NV: LifeStories 2010. 358 pp. DM, IC.

How to Obtain Books: Ways and Means by which Iowa Farm People May Secure Library Services, Books and Bulletins, by W. H. Stacy. Extension Bulletin 180. Ames: Iowa State College Extension Service, [1932]. 4 pp. IC.

Iowa: Life Changing, by Gigi Wood. Des Moines: Write Solution Group, 2006. 449 pp. "A custom publication that celebrates Iowa and its premier businesses. DM, IC.

The Iowa Prison System, by Fred E. Haynes. Iowa City: State University of Iowa, 1954. 79 pp. IC.

Jim Zabel: I Love It, I Love It, I Love It: 65 Years of Fun and Games, by Jim Zabel with Rich Wolfe. N.p., n.d. 260 pp. + 1 compact disc of "Jim Zabel's greatest calls." IC.

"Juntos Vivieron, Trabajaron y Aprendieron = Together They Lived, Worked and Learned: The History of Latinos in Valley Junction, Iowa," by Andrea Kay Tucker. M.A. thesis, Iowa State University 2008. 74 pp. IC.

The Legacy They Gave to Us: Early Quakers in Strand Parish, Norway, by Matilda Hansen. Laramie, WY: Commentary Press of Wyoming, 2010. xvi, 243 pp. IC.

Log of World War II: A Pacific Naval Diary, by Vincent Evo DeCook; edited by Kenneth W. Huck. Bloomington, IN: XLibris, 2010. IC.

Man of Deeds: Bishop Loras and the Upper Mississippi Valley Frontier, by Thomas E. Auge; edited by Amy Lorenz. Dubuque: Center for Dubuque History, Loras College, 2008. 262 pp. IC.

"Mexican Room: Public Schooling and the Children of Mexican Railroad Workers in Fort Madison, Iowa, 1923-1930," by Teresa A. Garcia. Ph.D. thesis, University of Iowa, 2008. xi, 200 pp. IC.

A Missouri Narrative from the Civil War Journals, Letters and Verse of William Clark Newlon, Company G, Third Infantry Regiment, Iowa Volunteers, edited by Christopher Newlon Green. [San Diego, 2006.] 220 pp. IC.

"Moments of Impact: Race, Injury, and Football History in Iowa's Collective Memory," by Jessica Lynn Schultz. Ph.D. thesis, University of Iowa, 2005. viii, 223 pp. IC.

Moon River and Me: A Memoir, by Andy Williams. New York: Viking, 2009. 308 pp. + 16 pp. of plates. IC.

My Father Was a Soldier: The Real Daughters of the American Revolution, compiled by Tracy E. Robinson and Rebecca C. Baird, Office of the Historian General. Washington, DC: National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution, [2010]. viii, 84 pp. "Celebrates the real Daughters of the American Revolution, those early DAR members whose fathers took part in the cause of Independence. It collects biographical sketches of 58 real Daughters, and 18 of their patriot fathers, in addition to a list of all 767 real Daughters." IC.

"Open in the Name of the Law: A Study in the Use and Usefulness of the Iowa Open Meetings Law," by Steven Stepanek. Ph.D. thesis, University of Iowa, 2004. v, 297 pp. IC.

"'Our Cherished Ideals': Rural Women, Activism, and Identity in the Midwest, 1950-1990," by Jenny Barker Devine. Ph.D. thesis, Iowa State University, 2008. vi, 413 pp. IC.

A Place to Grow: Remembering an Iowa Childhood, by Carolyn Swartz Bucksbaum. Chicago: History Works, 2009. 204 pp. *Growing up Jewish in Des Moines during the Great Depression and World War II*. DM, IC.

The Plowman Sings: The Essential Fiction, Poetry, and Drama of America's Forgotten Regionalist, by Jay G. Sigmund; edited by Zachary Michael Jack. Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2008. v, 119 pp. IC.

The Rebirth of Iowa's Trout Streams: A Success Story, by Bill Kalishek et al. Des Moines: Iowa Department of Natural Resources, 2007. 11 pp. IC.

Remembering Southeast Iowa's Peavine: A Rail Line with Beginnings as a Narrow Gauge, Then Converted to Standard Gauge; Affiliations with the Sante Fe and the Burlington Systems: A History Covering the Years 1871-1981, by Michael R. Johns. Chillicothe, MO: Milepost 208 Publications, 2009. 100 pp. IC.

"The Rise and Fall of Howard Dean: The Media's Role in the Iowa Caucus 'Scream' Debate," by Grant Michael Toups. M.A. thesis, University of Southern California, 2007. 71 pp. IC.

"The Role of the City Administrator and Small Town Planning: A Qualitative Study of Iowa's Small Town Managers," by Ryan A. Bland. M.C.R.P./M.P.A. thesis, Iowa State University, 2007. 105 pp. IC.

Sawbones: The Maturation of Orthopaedic Surgery, A Reminiscence, by Theodore A. Willis. Iowa City: University of Iowa, 1973. 95 pp. IC.

The Shelterbelt as an Asset on the Iowa Farm, by I. T. Bode. Extension Service Bulletin 108. [Ames: Iowa State College Extension Service, 1922.] IC.

Smokey: The Legendary Life of Iowa's "Mr. Country Music", by Terry Manley. Booneville: Snowflake Enterprises, 2010. 320 pp. IC.

Sunshine and Shadows: Three Childhoods: Father, Mother and Daughter, 1902-1946, by Elaine Rexroat Johnson. N.p., 2010. viii, 179 pp. *Webster City family*. DM, IC.

The Tallgrass Prairie Center Guide to Prairie Restoration in the Upper Midwest, by Daryl Smith et al. Iowa City: University of Iowa Press for the Tallgrass Prairie Center, 2010. xxi, 301 pp. IC.

A Tennessee Narrative from the Civil War Journals, Letters and Verse of William Clark Newlon, Company G, Third Infantry Regiment, Iowa Volunteers, edited by Christopher Newlon Green. [San Diego, 2008.] 133 pp. IC.

This Enduring Gift: A Flowering of Fairfield Poetry; 76 Poets Who Found Common Ground in One Small Prairie Town, edited by Freddy Niagara Fonseca. Fairfield: 1stWorld Publishing, 2010. IC.

"The Tradition of Meskwaki Ribbonwork: Cultural Meanings, Continuity, and Change," by Brenda Papakee Ackerman. M.S. thesis, Iowa State University, 2008. 161 pp. IC.

A True Pioneer Story: Memories of a Pioneer Girl, by Mary Ann Maulsby Mills; edited by Karlene Kingery. Ames, 2010. xv, 103 pp. *An account of the pioneer experiences of the Maulsby family between 1836 and 1843, including their migration by wagon from Indiana to Washington County, Iowa, in 1836.* DM, IC.

Under God's Spell: Frontier Evangelists, 1772-1915, by Cathy Luchetti. San Diego, CA: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1989. xxiii, 243 pp. IC.

The University of Iowa Museum of Natural History: Window to the World, by Cindy Opitz. Iowa City: University of Iowa, 2010. v, 59 pp. IC.

Vinnie Ream: An American Sculptor, by Edward S. Cooper. Chicago: Academy Chicago Publishers, 2004. xii, 300 pp., + 16 pp. of plates. IC.

"The Walking Nkisi: African-American Material Culture in Iowa, a Case Study on Yard Art in Waterloo, Iowa," by David Walter Jackson. Ph.D. thesis, University of Iowa, 2006. vii, 163 pp. IC.

The Zwingli F. Meyer Collection of German-American Methodism: Iowa Wesleyan College, Mt. Pleasant, Iowa. Mt. Pleasant: Iowa Wesleyan College, [196-?]. 15 pp. IC.

Announcements

THE IOWA HISTORY CENTER at Simpson College seeks nominations for the outstanding master's thesis in Iowa history for 2012. Selection will be based on contribution to the knowledge of Iowa history; originality of the subject matter or methodology; use of sources; and written expression. Nominees must have completed their master's degree between July 1, 2011, and June 30, 2012.

The winner will be announced in fall 2012 and receive a \$1,000 cash prize and an award plaque. Three copies of the thesis and a brief letter of nomination from the thesis advisor, which includes contact information for the nominee, should be submitted to Bill Friedrichs, Director, Iowa History Center, Simpson College, 701 North C Street, Indianola, IA 50125. Application deadline is June 30, 2012.

For further information, contact Linda Sinclair, 515-961-1528 or linda.sinclair@simpson.edu.

THE THIRTY-FOURTH Annual Mid-America Conference on History will be held September 20–22, 2012 in Springfield, Missouri. Paper and session proposals on all fields and phases of history, including overview sessions and graduate student papers, will be considered. Proposals should include a paragraph about the content of each paper. The deadline for proposals is May 15, 2012. Contact Worth Robert Miller, Department of History, Missouri State University, Springfield, MO 65897 or BobMiller@MissouriState.edu. For more information go to <http://history.missouristate.edu/>.

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Contributors

RENEE ANN CRAMER is associate professor and director of the Program in Law, Politics, and Society at Drake University. Her first book was *Cash, Color, and Colonialism: The Politics of Tribal Acknowledgment* (2006). Since shifting focus to midwifery and interpretive methods, her work on midwifery, pregnancy, and reproductive justice has been published in the *International Review of Qualitative Research* and is forthcoming in the journal *Women, Politics, and Policy*, as well as the volume *Fashion Talks: Undressing the Power of Style*.

JONATHAN WARNER is professor and tutor in social sciences at Quest University Canada, where he teaches courses in economics. He holds a Ph.D. in welfare economics from the University of Wales. Until 2008, he taught at Dordt College in Sioux Center, Iowa, where he became interested in the wonderfully diverse and inventive solutions to the problems of the Great Depression that Americans had produced. He has published other articles on the use of community currencies (scrip) during the Great Depression, most recently in the *International Journal of Community Currency Research* (2010) and the *Southern California Quarterly* (2008).

The State Historical Society of Iowa

The Annals of Iowa is published quarterly by the State Historical Society of Iowa, the Historical Division of the Department of Cultural Affairs of the State of Iowa. The society operates from two centers, Des Moines and Iowa City. A museum, research library, state archives, special collections, community programming, historic preservation, and membership programs are located at 600 East Locust Street, Des Moines, IA 50319, phone 515-281-5111. Publications, a research library, and special collections are located at 402 Iowa Avenue, Iowa City, IA 52240, phone 319-335-3916. The society also operates several historic sites across the state.

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Submissions

The Annals of Iowa invites the submission of articles on Iowa history and on subjects concerning the nation and the Midwest with an Iowa focus. State, local, and regional studies of political, economic, social, cultural, intellectual, institutional, ethnic, religious, material culture, archeological, and architectural history are welcome. The *Annals* also reviews significant books on related topics. A detailed set of editorial guidelines is available on request. All correspondence concerning editorial matters should be addressed to:

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